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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

VIOLENT AND NON-VIOLENT ACTION IN THE PURSUIT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EL SALVADOR

BY

ANNE FITZPATRICK

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall, 1992

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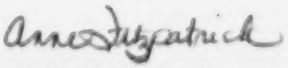

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled VIOLENT AND NON-VIOLENT ACTION IN THE PURSUIT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EL SALVADOR submitted by ANNE FITZPATRICK in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science.

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Abstract

The role of violent, and to a lesser extent, non-violent action in the achievement of the December 31, 1991 negotiated settlement between the Salvadoran government and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) are assessed. Revolutionary action is placed into historical context and its role assessed as it relates to the ruling elite (military and oligarchy), the Church, armed revolutionary forces and the popular mass organizations. Due to the historical context and the existing political structures, violence was necessary if any significant change to the economic, political and social structures which resulted in the immiseration of the masses was to be achieved in El Salvador. The work of Hanna Arendt, Frantz Fanon and Georges Sorel are explored in light of events leading up to the negotiated settlement. Each of these writers addresses empowerment through action.

Violent action in El Salvador provided the space within which structures of "popular power" could flourish. The non-violent sector of the revolutionary forces demonstrated the depth and breadth of desire for radical change. Non-violent action provided a strategy which was highly inclusionary and pluralistic. The organizations arising out of Salvadoran reality (Christian-based community and popular power structures) laid the groundwork for participatory democracy and the nature of the negotiated settlement holds the potential to ensure the popular power structures are retained. The prolonged struggle has meant these structures have endured for some time and thus their democratic and participatory nature means they may not be readily dismantled by the right. The FMLN's failure to overthrow the existing government means it still needs local, grass-roots support and therefore, may not risk efforts to subordinate these structures to the party politics of the left. While it is too soon to predict what will happen in El Salvador, the negotiated settlement may have contributed to the maintenance of

these structures. Participatory, pluralistic democracy built upon the mobilization of the masses during the Salvadoran struggle may provide the basis by which greater social justice will be achieved.

Preface

There exists the potential for dramatic change in El Salvador. On December 31, 1991 a negotiated settlement between the Salvadoran government and the armed revolutionary forces of El Salvador, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), ended more than a decade of civil war. This agreement may hold the potential not only for an end to the civil war in this country, but for the achievement of greater social justice through a radical change to the underlying political, economic and social relationships as well.

While the success of this agreement is unknown at this time, it is important to understand the circumstances which culminated in this negotiated settlement. Systemic violence has long been an integral part of Salvadoran life, acting as a mechanism to sustain a political, economic and social order which benefitted the few and denied social justice to the majority. Why were revolutionary forces successful in challenging the current regime when such forces for change have failed in the past? What was the role of the armed revolutionary forces and popular mass movements? What effect did each of these forces have on the revolutionary struggle? The level of violence which occurred in the struggle between revolutionary forces and counter-revolutionary forces in order to achieve the current settlement reached horrendous proportions. The 12,000 deaths in 1980 alone is proportional to 528,000 deaths in the United States.[1] Did the use of violence facilitate or hinder the establishment of a more equitable society? Now that a peace settlement has been reached, can the legacy of violence be overcome, so that greater social justice might be achieved?

To understand the nature of the struggle, why revolutionary forces achieved some level of success at this particular time, why it ended as it has, and the implications for the future, one must consider not only the role of vio-

lence and non-violent action, but also the historical context of the struggle for change. To place the current situation in perspective, this thesis opens with a discussion on violence and non-violent action. The work of Hannah Arendt, Frantz Fanon and Georges Sorel will then be discussed, so as to provide a basis for an exploration of the role of violence in the Salvadoran struggle later in this thesis. Arendt, Fanon and Sorel are renowned for their writings on revolution. Arendt, philosopher and political thinker, identifies the fundamental problem of modern revolutionary struggles as the subordination of political freedom to the desire to redress the poverty of the masses. Her work, *On Violence*, also introduces essential philosophical dilemmas posed by the use of violence. Fanon, revolutionary militant and psychiatrist writing within the context of the Algerian liberation struggle, advocates violence as a cleansing force in the face of the dehumanizing effects of oppression and exploitation in colonial society. Violence by the colonizer becomes a means of atomizing society, violence by the colonized can become a unifying force through which the oppressed can challenge the existing structures. Sorel is a French revolutionary theorist and a proponent of syndicalism. The general strike advocated by Sorel offers continuity in the struggle in El Salvador, where this strategy has had a role not only in the current struggle but in those of the past. While the situation in El Salvador presented no option but to use violence in order to change the existing structures of oppression and repression, non-violent action also contributed to the struggle. Within the framework of Arendt's, Fanon's and Sorel's analysis regarding revolutionary violence, the role of non-violent action, and its relationship to violent forces, will be addressed.

A brief history of El Salvador, identifying points salient to the present study, will be delineated in Chapter Two. Then, having introduced issues significant to the consideration of a revolutionary struggle through the works of Arendt,

Fanon and Sorel, and having outlined the historical context of this particular struggle, the role of violence and popular mass movements within El Salvador will be explored in Chapter Three.

In the final chapter the recent events in the struggle for change in El Salvador will be examined in light of the arguments and insights regarding revolution introduced by Arendt, Fanon and Sorel. In doing so, the following questions will be considered: within the context of El Salvador was there any alternative to violence if change was to be achieved? Did the use of violence enhance or hinder the potential for a social revolution? Did those elements of the popular mass movements which rejected violence conflict with armed guerrilla groups, or did these elements of the revolutionary forces complement each other in the struggle for change? Due to the realities of the late twentieth century (past revolutions betrayed; developments in telecommunications, weaponry and military capabilities; and the end of the Cold War) what is the role of violence and popular movements in the struggle? The nature of the changes under way, in particular greater democratization, may be better served by means other than violence. Yet within El Salvador there is also a profound need to address economic disparities. Could these disparities have been redressed without violence? How does one accommodate democratic values, such as tolerance, with the need for violence to redress economic disparities such as exist in El Salvador?

Violent and Non-Violent Action in the Pursuit of Social Justice in El Salvador

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Chapter One

Dimensions of Revolutionary Violence and Non-Violent Action

The Salvadoran people have been entangled in a struggle for social justice which has cost tens of thousands of lives[1] and the displacement of a million people.[2] In an effort to interpret events in El Salvador it is first important to define those concepts which form the basis of this analysis. The interpretation of these concepts will be affected by one's perspective of the world, by one's perspective on the role of government, and on whether or not revolution is seen as inevitable or even as potentially positive. On another level the use of violence to achieve revolutionary change will be determined by one's personal view of violence. Thus it is important to clearly delineate how these basic concepts will be utilized in the context of the present discussion on revolution in El Salvador. Within this discussion, what does social justice entail? How is the relationship between social justice and democracy perceived? What constitutes violence? Non-violence? Having defined the parameters of violence and non-violence what are the issues raised by their use in a revolutionary setting? To facilitate an understanding of the role of violence within a revolutionary environment the work of Hannah Arendt, Frantz Fanon and Georges Sorel will be utilized.

For many, the causes of the Salvadoran civil war rest within a system which has denied social justice to the majority in this country, and a lack of democracy which has served to prolong this injustice. Achieving social justice within El Salvador would require a redistribution of goods (food, clothing, shelter, health care, education, wealth) so that the basic needs of all are met. Beyond this, it would also involve the removal of barriers which limit the opportunity to achieve one's potential. It would not demand a rigid equality, for people have dif-

ferent levels of ability and aspiration.

Social justice, per se, has yet to be fully achieved anywhere, but some regions of the world are far ahead of others in attaining this goal. Although Communist regimes have placed greater emphasis on the pursuit of social justice, economic mismanagement and corruption mitigated the potential for achieving this goal. The economic crisis now confronting these regimes challenges their ability to achieve greater social justice and has led to the adoption of capitalist principles in many formerly Communist states.

At the same time, as this economic transition is occurring, a groundswell of support for democratic participation is seen around the world. While exceptions could be cited, the profound desire for a greater say in the decisions affecting one's life is reflected in the transition to pluralistic democracy within the former Communist world. Depending upon the form of democracy introduced, it has the potential to provide the mechanism through which a consensus on the definition of basic needs for a particular state can be reached, and to identify the means by which these needs will be met.

The desire for a greater say in one's life through the introduction of pluralistic democratic structures is evident in El Salvador. Until now, the existing electoral practices have provided only a facade of democracy, serving to perpetuate the ruling elite in power. Whether democracy in El Salvador will ensure a more equitable society will depend upon its form, its ability to accommodate the political aspirations of the majority and to transform an exclusionary system into a mechanism by which all sectors of society can be included in decisions affecting the future of the country. The authentic participation of all sectors of society will necessitate the observance of civil liberties (freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association) previously denied the majority of Salvadorans.

The negotiated settlement which provides the opportunity for greater

democracy and social justice in El Salvador was achieved through a brutal and bloody civil war. To understand the role revolutionary and counter-revolutionary violence played in the course of events in El Salvador, and the issues raised by this struggle, it is important to understand what this term means. In their discussion of revolution Fanon and Sorel are not interested in the fine distinctions related to the conceptualization of violence, rather they speak of it in its instrumental role of achieving a particular goal – revolutionary change. For Arendt these distinctions take precedence. Arendt raises fundamental questions regarding violence yet she does not define violence beyond noting its instrumental nature. Therefore, it is necessary to look to other sources in order to clarify what is meant by violence before addressing the issues raised by these three writers.

Newton Garver, a philosopher who has written on violence and pacifism, distinguishes violence from a term commonly connected to it – that of force.[3] Garver notes that force can be used without harm to a person (for example, in the rescue of a drowning swimmer) while violence can not. He draws our attention to the fact that violence and violation share the same Latin root, and suggests violence has a closer relationship to the concept of violation than to that of force. He relates violence to the violation of a person, to one's right to his body and control over it, and autonomy, the right to make one's own decisions. Such a definition is founded on fundamental human rights and allows consideration of personal or institutionalized violence as well as its overt and covert use.(1977: 269-270) A definition like that of Garver's brings a broader perspective to violence than those who stipulate that only the use of physical force qualifies as violence (i.e. Charles Tilly), and it is this definition of violence which is utilized in this paper.

It has been suggested that accepting Garver's definition of violence denies that violence is ever justified, for this would require prioritizing one individ-

uals rights over another's. (Audi 1977: 277) However, using fundamental human rights as the foundation for the definition of violence does not negate the possibility of prioritizing these rights. To do so, one needs to consider degree, an essential consideration in any realistic evaluation of violence. To equate all violence diminishes the debate.

Using Garver's concept of violence, philosopher Robert Litke explores the relationship between power and violence. In doing so Litke notes "much of what we are depends upon our ability to act in concert with each other".(1992: 174) It is this ability which Arendt defines as power.(1972: 143) In his work, Litke identifies the heart of violence as the "disempowerment of persons" whereby, one's ability to act, which is dependent on one's control of his body and ability to make decisions, is denied.(1992: 176) He adds another dimension to power – that of domination – "the ability to control or command". The author considers domination to establish a zero-sum relationship.(1992: 176-177)

In his own exploration regarding the parameters of violence, Litke examines Thomas Hobbes' work. Hobbes did not trust individuals to be able to consider their long-term good, rather they would resort to domination as a means to satisfy immediate desires. Such an approach would lead to the breakdown of the very society which is necessary to ensure many of life's benefits. Hobbes suggested the way to prevent this is through the establishment of a civil authority which would place restraints on domination, and thus ensure the preservation of "larger social patterns".(1992: 178) The institution of such an authority is in itself inherently violent, as it is based on psychological domination. As Litke notes, accepting Hobbes' paradigm acknowledges the integral role of domination in political and social life.(1992: 180) What Litke wishes to consider, in light of Hobbes' work, is whether domination is inherently violent and whether the restraints placed on domination are necessarily violent. Litke labels these

restraining forces as concertive power (ability to act in concert) and developmental power (ability to use and develop essential human capacities – rational thought, moral judgement, creativity, curiosity, etc.).(1992: 180-181) "A fundamental purpose of political activity is to enhance our ability to interact with each other so as to improve our lives."(1992: 181) This interaction not only enriches our lives but our ability to satisfy our desires. Therefore, in the long term, it is in our interest not to dominate others in a way that diminishes this concertive power. Likewise, to impede the development or use of essential human capacities also diminishes the benefits which can be gained by interaction. To do so has implications for one's own long-term well being. Litke states it is therefore in our own best interest to counterbalance the desire to dominate with the desire not to diminish the developmental power of others.(1992: 182) Litke does not suggest we should never exercise the ability to disempower others, but that it should not be done gratuitously. Litke makes his assessment of violence based on what is prudent, rather than on morality.

Some argue for a more precise definition of violence than one based on the concept of violation. While this certainly has the advantage of making it more workable, and avoids the issue of defining human rights, one has to question a definition such as that utilized by Charles Tilly in his book, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, which incorporates only physical force.(1978: 174-176) Such a definition rejects the notion of systemic violence. While there is danger in making the definition of violence so broad it becomes wholly unworkable, a more extensive definition can challenge people to consider how society contributes to that act. Such considerations are important when assessing systemic violence wrought by economic, political and social structures. A definition based solely on physical force also negates the psychological dimension of violence. Yet the psychological effects of violence can be far more damaging than

the physical effects and can serve as an enduring constraint upon the victim(s). To negate psychological violence would permit us to consider only the direct physical effect upon the victim of a "terrorist" act. Yet, as will be discussed in more detail later, "terrorism" by its very definition takes into account the psychological effect on others. One of the results sought by the use of systematic torture is the psychological effect on others. Do we do justice to such events if only the physical assault upon a specific victim are considered and not the broader psychological effect?

Thomas Platt, Professor of Philosophy, states the labeling of social structures and practices as violent does not change them, and that a label of "unjust" is more appropriate.(1992: 189) He challenges efforts to raise one's consciousness by using a definition other than physical force used to harm another person.(1992: 185-191) Platt is correct when he notes the dictum: "as the extension of a term increases, its intension decreases".(1992: 188) However, I dispute his contention that a more extensive definition of violence may be the first step in justifying an increased amount of violence in the world. Platt indicates that if violence initiated by one justifies a violent response by another, then extending the definition will justify a response in kind for a growing number of grievances.(1992: 188-189) Conversely, this would suggest that we would reduce the violence in the world if we only diminished the list of those acts labeled violent, and therefore eliminated the potential for a reciprocal response. Platt also fails to consider that a label of violence and the anticipation of a reciprocal response may challenge both the individual perpetrator and society as a whole to assess its role in the violence.

There is a danger though, if one considers intent rather than effects in conceptualizing violence. If intent were the prime mechanism for defining what is violence, we would then grant those in power the same right. People partici-

pating in non-violent action will bring a variety of motivations to any act. What the leadership envision may be quite different than what the followers anticipate. Undertaking an act (i.e. demonstration, strike) with the knowledge or anticipation of a violent response by the regime, thus legitimating a reciprocal response, does not make the original act violent. To do so would give legitimacy to the state's use of repressive mechanisms against all the tools of protest – violent or non-violent.

Non-violent action is so designated to dispel any connotations of inaction sometimes linked to the term pacifism. It connotes a conscious decision to protest. In his book, *The Politics of Non-Violent Action* (parts one to three), Gene Sharp distinguishes non-violent action from conciliation, verbal appeals, compromise and negotiation. While these strategies may be used in combination with violent or non-violent action they differ from these by their verbal nature as opposed to action. Sharp describes non-violent action as combat and as such is "diametrically opposed to the popular assumption that, at its strongest, nonviolent action relies on rational persuasion of the opponent, and that more commonly it consists simply of passive submission."(1973: 67)

In discussing a non-violent approach Sharp notes the source of a ruler's power is intimately linked to the obedience and cooperation of the subjects.(1973: 12) Authority (the right to command, to be heard and obeyed) is a main source of the ruler's power and once this is lost a leader's power begins to disintegrate. While a ruler may seek to retain power through the use of sanctions, the ability to do so effectively depends on the subject's submissiveness. Power then is a two-way relationship. To take action to change this relationship is a recognition of one's own power, that one is not helpless in the face of repression and exploitation. The form this action takes depends on the individual and the circumstances. One must take into consideration ideological, cultural and

philosophical factors if we are to fully understand why the decision to use violence or non-violent action is made and why people react to these as they do.

In assessing the motivation for the selection of non-violent action there can be as many differing reasons as there are for the use of violence. While the selection of either strategy will depend somewhat on the goal (the degree of change being sought), other factors, including expediency, resources, the existence of groups advocating one strategy or another, and questions of religion, morality or ethics also come into play. However, it should be noted that participants in one strategy may also participate in the other, depending on the particular situation.

If the implications of violent and non-violent action are to be analyzed, then degree makes a difference and one must assess the selection of a particular strategy, and the response to it, accordingly. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the various forms of violent and non-violent action. The choice of a violent or non-violent strategy, by either revolutionary forces or the ruling elite, has consequences. The perceived "rightness", or legitimacy, of such acts on the part of revolutionary or counter-revolutionary forces has implications for the future. The appropriateness of one's choice of strategies will affect the support given to either group and the repercussion once the struggle ends. The "rightness" of one's strategic choices will affect public support for actions taken against those identified as having abused the use of violence. If the response does not correspond to the public perception of what is merited, unrest may persist.

The violence to be addressed in this thesis relates to revolutionary situations and takes many forms, including the institutionalized violence of economic and political structures which perpetuate the immiseration of the majority. It is this violence which forms the backdrop of recent events in El Salvador. The maintenance of these structures necessitates repressive violence by the state, in

an effort to restrain the aspirations of the majority. Garver notes that once institutional violence is established it may require "relatively little overt violence to maintain it".(1977: 273)

Then there is the violence which grows out of a resistance to the first two forms. These include the spontaneous violence erupting out of attacks on peaceful demonstrations, self-defense, individual acts of violent protest, insurrection and the violence of guerrilla forces seeking to change the existing structures through armed struggle.

Terrorism deserves particular attention. It, in particular, is one type of violence vulnerable to political exploitation because of the connotations it has taken on. It has become a highly evocative term open to tremendous abuse. Just as in the case of sedition, a government seeking to repress its own citizens can use the label of terrorism to delegitimate actions wholly acceptable in other countries, while failing to incorporate acts performed on its behalf which would be illegal elsewhere. Among the various definitions of terrorism available is one offered by a CIA employee, Edward Mickolus(1979): "the use, or threat, of anxiety-inducing extranormal violence for political purposes by any individual or group, whether acting for, or in opposition to, established government authority, when such an act is intended to influence the attitudes and behavior of a target group wider than the immediate victims". The thinking of Mickolus' employer is reflected in his additional qualification, that terrorism is carried out "by basically autonomous non-state actors, whether or not they enjoy some degree of support from sympathetic states".(1979: 148) As Ted Gurr(1979) asserts, terrorism is generally considered to be an effort to paralyze political actors by the threat of unpredictable attack. However, he seeks to define terrorism without recourse to any assumptions regarding the possible effects being sought. Rather he incorporates three objective criteria: destructive violence carried out covertly, at least some of the

principal targets are political and finally, the violence is carried out by groups operating clandestinely and sporadically.(1979: 25) Although Gurr does acknowledge the use of terrorist tactics by regimes, the final element of his definition suggests the death squad activity in El Salvador, particularly during 1980-1981, and the military sweeps and bombing raids against civilian targets would not qualify as acts of terrorism. This attitude is also reflected in the final element of Mickolus' definition cited above, suggesting terrorism involves "autonomous non-state actors". I would dispute the final element of each of the definitions cited, for the military involvement in the death squads and the military's systematic attacks on civilians in rural areas were acts of terrorism. These incidents draw attention to the fact that both state and non-state actors can utilize terrorist acts as a mechanism to achieve their goals, and to the fact that terrorism is a tool of both spectrums of the political field - the left and the right. Although it may be appropriate to draw attention to state terrorism, one can not neglect the use of this same strategy by revolutionary forces.

What distinguishes a terrorist from a guerrilla? In his commentary on terrorism, David Rapoport(1971) makes the distinction based on their chosen targets. The guerrilla directs his energies at military targets, while the terrorist "prefers to avoid military targets".(1971: 44) Within the context of a revolutionary struggle, Rapoport suggests terrorist acts are used to gain support for the struggle, then to build momentum, and finally to eliminate moderate elements.(1971: 55) While guerrilla forces may utilize tactics commonly termed terrorist, a sustained guerrilla struggle requires the support of the people and therefore, it would be self-defeating to terrorize those people they depend upon. For this reason any such tactical use of "terrorism" by guerrilla forces must be selective.

For many, violence is an inherent part of revolution (the transformation of economic, political and social relationships). However, for a moment in time, the

events of 1989 challenged this concept. As the Communist regimes of the Soviet bloc began a radical transformation of both economic and political structures, a number of these countries did so with no, or little, recourse to violence. A pivotal force in this transition was Solidarity, a trade union movement, of Poland. Utilizing the principles of non-violence, this organization pursued, and successfully spearheaded, radical change to the political and economic relationships within Poland. Because of the unique history of Poland, and due to the nature of its relationship with the USSR, the latter country was unable to intervene to repress the growing and persistent unrest. The success of Solidarity was a pivotal event in enabling some of the other regimes of Eastern Europe to make revolutionary changes with a minimum of violence. Such an event focuses attention on the role of non-violent action within revolutionary situations.

While Sharp does not claim to have provided an exhaustive study of non-violent tactics he has provided an extensive list under the following categories: non-violent protest and persuasion (i.e. speeches, petitions, lobbying, processions, memorials, assemblies, and symbolic public acts such as wearing symbols of support, prayer, displays), social non-cooperation (i.e. boycotts, ostracism, suspension of social activities, withdrawal from social system), two types of economic non-cooperation - boycotts and strikes, political non-cooperation (i.e. boycott government institutions and organizations, refuse to cooperate with conscription or deportation policies, action by government workers) and finally nonviolent intervention (fasting, physical occupations, alternative social institutions or communications system, economic-blockades, land invasions, alternative economic institutions and markets, etc. and political intervention by overloading the system, identifying secret agents, civil disobedience, dual sovereignty). This list reveals how creative and flexible non-violent action can be.

What are the benefits of a non-violent strategy within a revolutionary situ-

ation? George Lakey(1973), activist and academic, cites a number of advantages to the strategy of non-violent action. These include: protection against agents provocateurs, easier to gain middle class support, resolves the psychological dilemma violence presents, the sheer cost to individual life and property of the alternative, the ecological implications of violent action for population demographics and the environment, and finally there is no dependence on suppliers of weaponry.(1973: 57-59, 172-173) Martin Oppenheimer(1969), a sociologist, indicates a non-violent movement can provide the means to overcome tensions which exist for revolutionaries in making the transition from demanding reform to seeking the overthrow of the government. Non-violent revolutionary movements can seek both concomitantly.(1969: 129) In a regime as violent as that of El Salvador's, non-violence can also be a disconcerting strategy, throwing the attacker off balance and challenging him to question his own actions. But as Lakey indicates, non-violent political action is only feasible when it is allowed expression.(1973: 59)

Given a particular time and set of circumstances non-violent revolution may be possible. However, the negotiated settlement which was achieved in El Salvador involved a sustained civil war. For Arendt, Fanon and Sorel violence is an inherent part of revolutionary change. Even so, each of these writers assesses the role of violence from different perspectives. For this reason each of the three writers introduced into the discussion on revolutionary violence will, for the most part, be discussed separately, beginning with Arendt.

Arendt distinguishes modern revolutions from those of the past, when revolution meant the restoration of something that had existed previously. By contrast, modern revolutions represent new beginnings which are linked to the idea of freedom. Both the American and the French revolutions began as struggles for freedom, but in France the struggle was perverted by necessity and this has

left an enduring legacy.

Marx is credited by Arendt with linking the economic and the political, persuading the poor poverty is political, not natural. It is the result of violence rather than scarcity. With this orientation, abundance rather than freedom became the goal of revolution. "Thus the role of revolution was no longer to liberate men from the oppression of their fellow men, let alone found freedom, but to liberate the life process of society from the fetters of scarcity so that it could swell into a stream of abundance. Not freedom but abundance became the aim of revolution."(1982: 58) Arendt notes many confuse liberation, an absence of oppression (possible under monarchical rule), with freedom, the right to participate in public affairs (only possible in democracies). The end of rebellion is liberation, the end of revolution is the foundation of freedom. The turmoil of rebellion often defeats revolution.

Arendt points to an intimate link between beginnings and violence as violence permits a break with the past. Yet she finds violence to be marginal to politics, for where there is violence that political aspect of man, "the power of speech", ends. She points out "that violence itself is incapable of speech, and not merely that speech is helpless when confronted with violence."(1982: 9) Does violence silence speech, or can it play a role in facilitating it? In certain situations is it possible no dialogue would occur without violence or the threat of it? Even Arendt agrees with the contention violence is sometimes the "only way of ensuring a hearing for moderation".(1972: 176)

While Arendt recognizes the role of violence in breaking with the past, she is concerned about the effects of violence and considers the rationality of using violence to achieve change. Since the full consequences of violence can not be predicted, the means are often of greater relevance than the intended goals. Arendt finds the use of violence rational when it is the "only way to set scales of

justice right again"(1972: 161) and "to the extent that it is effective in reaching the end that must justify it. And since when we act we never know with any certainty the eventual consequences of what we are doing, violence can remain rational only if it pursues short-term goals."(1972: 176)

Since the consequences of violence are unclear, there is an element of arbitrariness and, therefore, its use is only rational in the pursuit of short term goals. Violence can bring victory, but at what price? Arendt questions the long term implications of the use of violence, for once it has been introduced as a mechanism for achieving change it will be harder for the body politic to resist it in the future.

> The danger of violence, even if it moves consciously within a nonextremist framework of short-term goals, will always be that the means overwhelm the end. If goals are not achieved rapidly, the result will be not merely defeat but the introduction of the practice of violence into the whole body politic. Action is irreversible, and a return to the *status quo* in case of defeat is always unlikely. The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world.(1972: 177)

Violence may serve to unmask the hypocrisy of the enemy. Rage, which occurs where conditions could be changed but are not, serves to expose the existing suffering and misery, forcing others to confront this reality. However, rage and violence become irrational "when they are directed at substitutes".(1972: 161) Is the intraracial violence among blacks in South Africa during the early years of the 1990s misdirected towards each other, rather than at the economic, political and social structures which lay at the root of the gross inequalities in that country?

In her writings, Arendt does not simply consider the use of violence by revolutionary groups, but also by the regime in power. She distinguishes violence from power:

> Power springs up whenever people get together and act in concert, but it derives its legitimacy from the initial getting together rather than any action that then may

> follow. Legitimacy, when challenged, bases itself on an appeal to the past, while justification relates itself to an end that lies in the future. Violence can be justifiable, but it never will be legitimate. Its justification loses in plausibility the further its intended end recedes in the future. No one questions the use of violence in self-defense, because the danger is not only clear but also present, and the end justifying the means is immediate.(1972:151)

Although she never arrives at a specific definition of violence, she notes its instrumental character. Power is the ability to act in concert and it is the essence of all government. It "needs no justification, only legitimacy".(1972: 151) Revolution is possible when power has disintegrated. Where power is lost, the regime may seek to retain its rule by the use of violence. Terror, then, is the "form of government that comes into being when violence, having destroyed all power, does not abdicate but, on the contrary remains in full control. It has often been noticed that the effectiveness of terror depends almost entirely on the degree of social atomization."(1972: 154) While violence can destroy power, it can never create it.(1972: 155)

Revolution is not possible while the body politic retains its authority, that is while the military will continue to obey civilians. Loss of authority is not sufficient for a successful revolution, nor is the use of violence. There must also be those willing and organized to assume power. In the end, Arendt suggests violence is "more the weapon of reform than revolution", for one can cite many instances of reform resulting from violent outbursts but far fewer cases of violence resulting in revolutionary change.(1972: 176)

While Arendt's assessment of the role of violence speaks to the intellect, Frantz Fanon's work on the dehumanizing nature of colonialism in Africa speaks to one's emotions and passions. "Colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence."(1968: 61) As such, he sees violence as the only means of overcoming all the obstacles presented by

colonialism, the only way to destroy the compartmentalized society created by colonialism. Where violence has been minimal, change has been limited. Violence prevents such accommodation.

Fanon considers the effect of violence on the individual level as well as its effect on different segments of society. At the individual level among the oppressed, violence becomes a "cleansing force", freeing people from a sense of inferiority and from inaction. On a broader level, violence becomes a unifying force, mobilizing the people in a common cause. Even if armed struggle is symbolic, it is unifying. This sense of unity is reinforced as violent acts enter revolutionary mythology. When people have taken part in violence it means no one individual can set himself up as liberator, as a living god. Attempts at mystification are prevented.

The demonstration effect of the successful use of violence affects both the oppressed and the oppressors. Among the oppressed such success may offer inspiration, and to the oppressors it may serve as a warning of things to come, of the risks of continued intransigence.

Fanon dismisses non-violence as a bourgeois ploy, as both the national bourgeoisie and colonists have a vested interest in compromise. For Fanon, the peasantry is the only truly revolutionary force, as the intellectuals and the bourgeoisie are co-opted by the colonial powers. It is the peasantry, through their continued struggle, who raise the consciousness of the intellectuals, drawing them into a struggle grounded in the people. Resistance cannot be sustained over the long term based on resentment; it is important to raise the consciousness of the people. The intellectuals, in their turn, struggle to achieve this as they utilize their organizational skills to transform spontaneous violence into revolutionary action. In this process a common goal is forged: to oust the colonial power.

As struggle continues, the regime will offer small concessions in order to produce doubt among the supporters of the revolution. It is the willingness of the national parties to embrace these concessions, to compromise, along with their neglect of the peasantry, which leads Fanon to dismiss them as a force for radical change. Fanon also criticizes the role of Christianity for its complicity with the repressive forces of the colonial regimes, as religion is used to rationalize the violence of colonialism and to limit change.

Fanon suggests there comes a point of no return – some event, almost always violent, which symbolizes to all that there is no going back. While speaking in terms of colonial regimes, Fanon makes the point no colonizer is brought to justice for the horrendous crimes committed in the name of the regime in power. He disdains the hypocrisy of world bodies which espouse equality for all. This hypocrisy is unmasked when outrage is expressed over the death of a single foreigner, while thousands of natives die without comment.

In an analysis of Fanon's justification of violence, O. Fashina(1989) raises the issue of whether moral arguments have any force in colonial conflict. Based on such an argument, the avoidance of armed conflict would require moral agreement. Is this possible in the context of colonialism? Fanon indicates it is not, for the oppressed and the oppressors do not share common moral values. "Truth is partisan" in this context.(Fashina 1989: 197) In the case of El Salvador, where extreme inequities exist, are there shared common moral values? Does the peace settlement indicate there may be shared moral values?

While Fanon's optimism for decolonization proved flawed, one can not help but think his passionate demand for change through violence would strike a chord with other oppressed peoples. But as a psychiatrist, Fanon was very aware of the brutalizing effects of violence. He warns against succumbing to "unmixed and total brutality", for such a response will quickly defeat the revolu-

tionary movement.(1963: 146-147) Nationalist sentiments must be transformed into "a consciousness of social and political needs".(1963: 204) Violence must be channeled to achieve a growing political consciousness which leads to decentralized participatory democracy.(1963: 185-198)

If violence, in Fanon's perception, provides a healing force while raising the consciousness of the natives, for Sorel violence serves to crystallize class differences. In comparison to Fanon, Sorel's perspective is a dispassionate, rhetorical call to violence.

For Sorel it is the general strike which plays the central role in crystallizing cleavages, as people assign "rightness" to one side or the other. He accepts Marx's belief that production is the basis of all relationships and as such he gives economics pre-eminence. Thus, the appropriateness of the general strike as a weapon of change. Strikes replace battles; the enemy is the capitalist regime rather than external armies. The practice of strikes serves to engender the notion of catastrophic revolution.

Like Fanon, Sorel denounces incremental reform. Rather, he advocates catastrophic change through heroic means. In the context of labor unrest, violence begets heroism. It differs from force in that this is an act of authority, while the former is an act of revolt. Authority seeks to impose order, while violence seeks to destroy it.

Sorel rests his faith in the proletariat, whereas Fanon rests his in the peasantry. Neither has faith in the intellectuals, although Fanon suggests if the struggle for decolonization endures long enough the violence has the impact of raising the consciousness of the intellectuals and draws them to the people. For Sorel, socialism grows out of the work place, not from the intelligentsia or the parliamentary socialists for whom economics is not preeminent among all considerations.

Sorel distinguishes a proletarian general strike from a political general strike. While both involve syndicates (producer associations or trade unions), and each represents a kind of socialism, there are important differences. The political general strike is inspired by politicians and does not presuppose class warfare. The Syndicalists' general strike would simply be one element of a broader revolution. In a political general strike the proletariat becomes a convenient instrument of parliamentary socialists. A political general strike presupposes diverse social groups possess faith in the force of the state and the strikers' success reinforces state power. Such a strike is only undertaken when a "complete framework of future organization is ready"(1961: 160) and ends in a dictatorship of the politicians, an outcome Sorel rejects.

On the other hand the proletarian general strike, a method which gives representation to the workers, is based on class distinctions, is led by the syndicates, and rejects the assumption of state power. Sorel rejects the idea the masses need to be led by an elite. He suggests Syndicalism would be better off with "weak and chaotic organizations rather than...copy the political forms of the middle class".(1961: 178)

Both Fanon and Sorel recognize the power of myth as it pertains to revolution. While Fanon mythologizes violence, Sorel does the same for the general strike. The general strike is the myth in which socialism is wholly comprised in one image. Sorel discusses its power, even if we know it is a myth. He maintains myth can not be refuted for it is synonymous with convictions held. This would seem to be a prerequisite for an act becoming part of revolutionary mythology.

Fanon indicates violent acts by the oppressed, which are mythologized, become a mechanism for mobilizing the masses. Sorel suggests the state contributes to this mobilization by martyring people. He compares religion and revo-

lutionary myths, suggesting they both occupy a profound region of our mental life and are therefore unaffected by criticism. Christian ideology is based on heroic events which became part of religious mythology. Martyrdom creates a cleavage between the persecuted and the persecutors. Apocalyptic images are used to mobilize people in the name of Christianity. For Sorel, these facts parallel the development of revolutionary mythology, wherein violence within the context of labor unrest begets heroism, and repeated strikes engender images of catastrophic revolution. As in Christianity, these images can serve to mobilize the masses, for as Sorel notes, "myths are not the description of things, but expressions of a determination to act."(1961: 50)

Sorel is aware of the relationship between conflict and group cohesion stressed by Fanon. Violence crystallizes the difference between proletariat and middle class interests, and ongoing violence helps preserve the distinctive character of the working class. It aids in the retention of revolutionary ideas which are essential to being effective. The regime attempts to co-opt the middle class through the threat posed by this violence. This threat breaks down the barriers of regionalism which might divide the middle class.

What are the motives of moralists averse to violence? Sorel advises religion and education have conditioned us to think any violence is a manifestation of a return to barbarism. This permits strong central authorities, with little emphasis on political liberties. Sorel does not share Arendt's scruples regarding the end versus the means. For him the end would appear to justify the means, as he looks beyond the immediate results of violence to the distant consequences.

While Arendt raises profound questions of morality and rationality as they relate to violence, Fanon and Sorel consider the instrumental use of violence in changing relationships. Arendt considers revolutionary violence in terms of

achieving freedom, participation in the working of the state, although she indicates this struggle has been perverted by necessity. Sorel provides an economic rationale for the use of revolutionary violence as a mechanism to crystallize class differences. He rejects the assumption of state power. Somewhere in between these two perspectives is Fanon, for he sees violence as a means of obtaining both through the healing and decolonization resulting from the overthrow of colonial regimes.

Chapter Two

The Roots of El Salvador's Revolutionary Struggle

To fully understand the present situation in El Salvador, the strategies selected by either side in the civil war, and the implications of the peace agreement reached by the state government and the FMLN, it is important to place these events in historical context. While space for such a discussion is limited, a brief chronological overview will highlight those historical facts relevant to the present discussion. Among other sources, James Dunkerley's *Power in the Isthmus* and Tommie Sue Montgomery's *Revolution in El Salvador*, have provided the basis for this chapter.

The legacy of the Spanish conquest endures in El Salvador: treatment of the Indians – taking their labor first, then their land; the predominance of Catholicism, at least in nominal terms; the prevalence of the Spanish language; the structure of the economy – based on estates, the use of coercive techniques to guarantee both a labor supply and access to land, monoculture and a emphasis on production for export; the foundation for the oligarchy established by the Spanish land grant system; authoritarianism; and the interference of international powers.

The independence of Central America from Spanish rule in 1821 did not bring any change to the economic and social structures put in place by the Spanish. There was no change in the land or labor system. Independence was followed by years of Conservative and Liberal feuding which served to enhance the role of the military. Control over large estates founded in the Spanish land grant system also facilitated the role of the *caudillo* (strong man), whose power was based on force. By the late 1830s, the Conservatives, with a focus on cen-

tralism and the retention of old social arrangements, including communal land ownership for the Indians, came to prevail and endured for three decades.

In response to growing world demand for coffee, major economic changes began to take place in the last third of the nineteenth century. With these changes, the Liberals rose to power and pursued a liberalized trade policy, an end to clerical privilege, land reform applied to both the communal lands of the Indians and the property of the Church, and an emphasis on private ownership and individual rights.

The rise of coffee as a major product for the region resulted in the subordination of subsistence agriculture to market agriculture. This process increased the concentration of land as *hacendados* (large estate owners) expanded production; an intensified exploitation of labor as a large, seasonal workforce was required; and an increased discrepancy between rich and poor. Repressive legislation (i.e. vagrancy laws, debt peonage) was utilized to guarantee a labor supply and, increasingly, protection of Indian communal lands was withdrawn.

In El Salvador, with its small land base and high population density, the increasing importance of coffee as an export crop intensified pressure on communal lands.[1] With the *hacienda* (large estate) as the focal point of economic life, enforcement of the new statutes was left in the hands of the *hacendados* through the use of private armies. The use of these local armies reduced the dependence of the oligarchy on the state. Although resistance to the changes taking place eventually led to the establishment of a rural police force, a non-agrarian police force and a National Guard (1911), the *haciendas* were the main focus of social control. In El Salvador the police got orders from *hacendados* well into the twentieth century. In fact, police were often billeted on the *haciendas*.

The changes under way in Central America attracted European immi-

grants. As immigration to El Salvador increased, the new arrivals intermarried with local Salvadoran families. The immigrants brought with them capital for investment. This source of capital, along with the oligarchy's retention of control over the production and export of coffee, the financing of their own banks, and as a major source of funds for railway development, meant there was limited direct foreign investment in El Salvador until the 1960s.

The decline in the economic well being of the masses resulting from the introduction of coffee as a major export crop was further exacerbated by the depression in 1929. Demand for coffee fell at a time when the subsistence base of the peasants had been reduced. During this period wages declined while unemployment rose.[2] At the same time there was also a decline in the price of staples for the domestic market. While this aided the urban population it aggravated economic pressures already faced by the rural peasants.

The effects of the recession, centered around WWI and the subsequent depression, led to increased political competition at a time when trade unions were gaining momentum and new ideologies were circulating in the region. In El Salvador, the Communists became a significant force at this time. Founded by Augustín Farabundo Martí in 1930, the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS) built support through broad based organizations but maintained the Comintern's "class against class" strategy of the time and rejected united front work.[3]

During this time a progressive president, Arturo Araujo, was elected in El Salvador. His election aroused hope among the poor and instilled fear among the elites. As the economy continued to decline, unrest grew. Unable to meet the payroll, and unwilling to pay the military while members of the bureaucracy went without their salaries, Araujo was ousted in a military coup, one without the participation of the oligarchy. General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez (1931-1944) was named Araujo's successor.

Elections the following year were suspended in Marxist strongholds and were generally characterized by fraud. A call for insurrectional uprisings was answered by distinct rural and urban movements. The urban response was limited to the capital and involved the forces of the PCS, there was no mass following. While the peasants of the eastern rural areas did not respond to the call to revolt, in the west, where coffee growers had dispossessed the Indians, the call to insurrection was backed overwhelmingly by local peasants, led by local indigenous leaders.[4] When the insurrection collapsed due to a lack of organization and poor coordination, Indians became the targets of repression. The regime's reaction to the unrest came to mark the event more than the revolt itself. What ensued was a massacre, called the *matanza*, with estimates generally ranging around 30,000 dead, including Martí. Many of the victims were killed by vigilantes. The racist nature of the repression resulted in the suppression of Indian culture, as a means of survival. The repressive methods of the military also suppressed worker's organizations and intimidated the middle class. Rural unions were outlawed and other political organizations were prohibited. The PCS ceased to exist for a dozen years. One legacy of the *matanza* was the role it played in the PCS's aversion to insurrection until the 1980s.

The *matanza* established the strength of military rule in El Salvador. The oligarchic acquiescence to the military's brutal repression following the uprising, meant Martínez's regime was strong enough to act independently of the oligarchy. Among other policies, Martínez suspended debt payments to the United States, cut interest rates, established a central bank, included the elite in a new state credit bank so they now had a vested interest in state policies they had previously opposed, set exchange controls, and established tariffs. These changes reflected a realignment of politico-economic power. For the next fifty years the military, not the oligarchy, was the principal political protagonist in El Salvador.

During this time, the United States enjoyed growing influence in El Salvador. Economically, the United States was increasingly significant as it began replacing many of the traditional European markets. In 1930, at a time when coffee made up 90 per cent of El Salvador's export earnings, 14.9 per cent of its coffee was exported to the United States, by 1943, 96.4 per cent went there.[5] The United States generally encouraged a democratic facade for the autocratic regimes of the area. Having fought WWII based on democracy, the United States government could do little else in its aftermath. Having crushed their opposition in the 1930s, the 1940s saw a relative decline in coercive control by the existing regime, with cooptation replacing more repressive mechanisms of control. Some democratic openings arose out of popular mobilization and democratic demands.

The stresses of the great depression and WWII, and the disruption of the market caused by these events, led to rising unrest in El Salvador. Workers were demanding improved wages and working conditions. In her work regarding the growing unrest and opposition to Martínez' brutality and economic policies, Patricia Parkham(1988) indicates resistance developed even among the oligarchy, as it feared the government's intrusion into private organizations including the Coffee Growers Association, a revision of the tax structure, and the nationalization of banks.(1988: 34-38) An attempted coup by army officers seeking reform[6] was crushed by the para-military loyal to Martínez. The torture and execution of participants in this insurrection aroused the support of the lower-class urban Salvadorans.(1988: 60-61) A "civic" strike led by students was called, and was supported by the middle and upper classes throughout the country. The peasantry did not participate and the workers' support was initially somewhat ambivalent. In some cases workers were offered a stipend in order to assure their support. In other cases workers did join of their own volition.

However, it was when the police shot into a group of boys on the street, killing the son of a prominent San Salvadoran family, that the strike achieved massive urban support.(1988: 72-79) Within a week, Martínez had left the country. General Menéndez, taking over as interim leader in 1944, reinstated freedom of the press, declared an amnesty for political prisoners and abolished Martínez's secret police. Before elections could be held, Menéndez was ousted in a coup d'etat led by Colonel Osmin Aguirre (leader of the 1932 repression campaign under Martínez). The military unified behind Aguirre in an effort to repress the growing unrest.

While 1944 opened with the potential for reform in El Salvador under Menéndez's reformist regime, in reality it became a period of stagnation as General Salvador Castaneda Castro, a Martínez supporter, won an election in which no civilians contested the race for president. Castaneda proved an ineffective leader and was removed from office in a 1948 coup d'etat.

The new junta was made up of a young, middle class, technocratic but staunchly anti-Communist group led by Colonel Oscar Osorio (1950-1956). New manufacturing and agricultural methods were to be supported. The new regime increased taxes levied on coffee exports and ended anti-industrial legislation. The increase in cotton production during this time led to environmental problems related to deforestation and the use of chemicals, and increased landlessness. In an effort to gain the support of new sectors of the population, the regime tolerated a certain level of political competition within the middle class and landed elite, some trade unions were to be permitted under close control of the regime, and the university was granted autonomy. However, rural organizing continued to be repressed and real democracy remained a pretense. Osorio established a military backed political party, the Revolutionary Party of Democratic Unification [PRUD, to be replaced by the National Conciliation Party (PCN) in 1961]. While

the military maintained political power, the oligarchy held a veto over economic policies. Thus, the agrarian reforms included in the 1950 Constitution were never seriously implemented.

In the face of increased opposition, Osorio's successor, José María Lemus (1956-1960), loosened restrictions. But a year after Lemus took power the price of coffee fell, the economy went into a decline, and the regime faced growing unrest. Opposition came from the middle class, whose political aspirations had been restricted during the 1950s, and students, who were inspired by the Cuban Revolution.[7]

While Communists had been involved in the 1932 uprising in El Salvador, Cuba was the site of the first successful Communist revolution in Latin America. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 reverberated throughout the Americas. As a result, Communist parties were suppressed elsewhere in Latin America. The United States would not tolerate another revolution so close to home. To ensure such an event did not occur, the United States established a network for military training and counterinsurgency, integrated Latin American armed forces into the strategic plans of the United States' military, and expanded the existing program of training and indoctrination operating under the auspices of the Pentagon. In El Salvador, the paramilitary network organized by the United States was dominated by the Democratic Nationalist Organization (ORDEN), an agency for rural repression, and a nation wide intelligence agency, ANSESAL. All this at a time when no armed insurgency existed in El Salvador.

Following the Cuban Revolution, the United States also sought to reduce the risk of another revolution in Latin America by encouraging reform through a developmental model based on capitalistic economic principles. The Alliance for Progress (which provided loans and tariff free importation of capital equipment) was established to facilitate "development" by encouraging industry for the

export market. "Progress", in the sense of the Alliance, meant maintenance of the status quo. The earlier policy of import substitution had failed to ensure development and, in the face of the Cuban Revolution, the Central American governments also sought alternatives. The development of a common market was seen to hold out such a possibility as it would offer a regional market for industrialization. In 1961, the Central American Common Market (CACM) was established. The stated goal of CACM – to see the masses benefit from development (and thus undermine socialism in the region) – converged with the goals of the United States' Alliance for Progress.

One consequence of this industrialization was that a process of differentiation within the oligarchy, which had begun in the earlier part of the century, was accentuated. Three distinct sectors were identifiable: the traditional oligarchy, or planters, who diversified into cotton and sugar while retaining a long held interest in banking; a mixed group, rooted in agrarian capital but diversifying into the manufacturing industry in the 1960s; and the merchants, who dominated the retail trade. Despite their differences, these sectors were dominated by the landed oligarchy.

The programs established in the wake of the Cuban Revolution led to an increase in capital intensive industry geared to export. As factory and middle class jobs in the urban areas grew due to this industry, unemployment in the rural areas rose, increasing the flow of people to the cities. Then, as the price of the imported raw materials required for production soared in the late 1960s and 1970s, the terms of trade and industrial exports declined. As a result, the CACM accord broke down. In the meantime, the accord only served to accelerate, rather than curb, disparities which existed between the more highly developed El Salvador and the less developed Honduras, as the former increased exports to the latter. This rising tension between the two countries would form the back-

drop for problems to be discussed later.

The United States also sought an alternative to right wing military rule in an effort to avert another revolution in Latin America. It found this alternative in the Christian Democratic parties. Based on anti-Communism and Catholic social doctrine, Christian Democracy provided the United States with an acceptable alternative to military dictators. In El Salvador the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) was formed in November 1960. During the 1960s, the Catholic Church, seeking a peaceful alternative to the Cuban Revolution, aligned itself with the PDC, which was pursuing limited reforms within the political system.

Inspired by the Cuban Revolution, the Salvadoran university population sought active participation in the congressional and municipal elections of 1960. In August of that same year, martial law was declared and the university campus was occupied. Students, radicalized by such events, proved to be a vital source of support for the revolutionary movement in the 1970s.[8]

A reformist coup in El Salvador during October 1960 survived only twelve weeks. The counter-coup was led by Colonel Rivera (1961-1967), who ruled under the banner of a new military party, the National Conciliation Party (PCN). As in 1944, the right wing military had taken the reins of power from the representatives of a reformist military coup. The new military regime was strong enough to require concessions from the elite classes, however these were minor and they failed to change the basic structure of production. Starting in 1961, the "recognized" opposition parties were given a quota of seats in government. As the elections held in 1961, 1964, 1966, and 1968, under pressure from the United States, served to reduce the image of a dictatorial regime, they also engendered the expectation that the electoral process was a viable option for those seeking changes to the existing system. The PCN, the military party established in 1961, led the opposition to believe it was possible for them to win

power, something PRUD, the earlier incarnation of the PCN, had not done. But hopes the electoral system would offer a means of addressing inequities did little to impede rising deprivation and polarization within El Salvador.

Regional tension between El Salvador and Honduras over trade issues was growing at a time when there was also a resurgence of the labor movement. To redress internal pressures created by expanding cattle and cotton industries, Colonel Arellano of Honduras revived agrarian reform. Many Salvadorans had fled to Honduras after the *matanza* and the subsequent repression. As well, many Salvadorans had relocated to Honduras in the pursuit of land. Some 300,000 Salvadorans settled in Honduras. Under the new land reform policies, it was Salvadorans who were ousted from their property in Honduras. El Salvador, the most densely populated country in Central America, was losing the safety valve relocation to Honduras had offered. When friction between the two countries erupted into war in 1969, it was brief, but the consequences for El Salvador proved significant. Not only did El Salvador lose its trade with Honduras, it also had the expense of replenishing its military supplies, and more significantly, it had to cope with tens of thousands of Salvadorans returning from Honduras. As well as putting pressure on their government for land, those Salvadorans returning to their native country had also been affected by their experiences in the Honduran banana enclave where labor was better organized and wages were higher. Politicized by their experiences in Honduras, many were forced to join the informal sector, a segment of the population which would be at the forefront of subsequent mobilization in El Salvador.

In the decade following the promises made by the Alliance for Progress (1961-1971), the number of landless families in El Salvador more than tripled. Yet half the land of the large farms was utilized as pasture, or simply left fallow. Much of the land available to small land holders was eroded. As well, mecha-

nization and the growth of export crops resulted in a decline in the percentage of industrial workers in the work force – "from 13.1 per cent in 1960 to 11.1 per cent in 1970".[9] During the 1970s, wealth would concentrate in fewer hands while unemployment and underemployment grew, and the real purchasing power of workers was reduced.[10]

Progressive segments of the Catholic Church played a significant role in the events of the 1970s and 1980s. Although one segment of the Church would continue the traditional role much of the Church had played, that of allying itself with the ruling elite, another segment came to espouse a theology of liberation for the poor. The Church was in a unique position to be able to provide a voice for the impoverished. As the oldest existing institution in the region, the Church had a well established organizational base. It enjoyed networks throughout the country, and because of its level of organization, the Church could readily intensify its work with the poor. The international links of the Church facilitated fundraising abroad and provided a means of informing the world of the situation in which the majority of the people in El Salvador lived.

The progressive segment of the Church established a network of Christian base communities (CEBs) and formed a lay ministry. Profoundly democratic, the CEBs encouraged grass-roots participation and decision making in the selection of lay leaders and in shaping the form and function of each group. With the leadership of the lay ministers, and through the CEBs, peasants came to articulate their demands for social justice. Campaigns for agrarian reform and workers rights came to be identified with liberation theology. In El Salvador, proponents of this theology not only offered a voice for the poor, they also sought to educate the children of the elite regarding the reality of life for the majority of Salvadorans. In doing so, they hoped to create a sense of responsibility for change among the wealthy. The Church pursued this by establishing a

new school, the Central American University in San Salvador, in 1966. While liberation theology mobilized support for change, it also provided the organization necessary to make demands for change effectively. In 1974, a popular mass organization, the United Popular Action Front (FAPU), grew out of the crusading efforts of the Church. The FAPU brought together various segments of the population including peasants, students, educators and the Church, to provide a foundation upon which to build support in the struggle for social justice.

During the 1960s, the military regime of El Salvador offered the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) a subordinate role in the administration. Anticipating the possibility of a win in the 1972 election, the PDC refused. Instead, it formed an alliance, the National Opposition Union (UNO), which included the Revolutionary National Movement (MNR), a social democratic party affiliated with the Socialist International, and the Democratic National Union (UDN), a coalition consisting of leftist elements forming a front for the proscribed Salvadoran Communist Party. The UDN emphasized basic democratic demands. By limiting the degree of Marxist discourse, the UDN gained a broader base of support than that available to the PCS.

The presidential election in February 1972 was to be followed by mayoral and Assembly elections the following month. Faced with the potential loss of the PCN's majority in the assembly, the Central Elections Council established under Osorio, disqualified UNO slates in the "six largest departments in the country–including San Salvador, where the UNO strength was greatest".[11] Then, UNO won the national presidential election, only to have it stolen through fraud.[12] Uncertain how to act outside of the electoral sphere, UNO failed to act on its threat of a general strike. The electoral fraud was quickly followed by a reformist coup but a counter offensive by the National Guard promptly suppressed the rebels. These events clarified the rules of the game: "elections could be contest-

ed but not won by the opposition".[13] The UNO candidate, José Napoleón Duarte of the PDC, was forced into exile and repressive violence escalated. The regime did seek a rapprochement with the opposition. While the radical left refused, the PDC cooperated in an effort to maintain some semblance of power. A gesture towards land reform was quickly quashed with the threat of yet another coup. The manipulation and corruption of the electoral process and inadequate reforms alienated "many workers, peasants and youth".[14] At the same time much of the oligarchy was infuriated by the attempt at any reform.[15]

Following the 1972 election, the chance of implementing change by working through the political system was seriously challenged. Even before the election, some Salvadorans had given up hope that change would come through the ballot box. In 1970, the first armed resistance group was formed. By the end of the 1970s there would be five armed guerrilla forces operating in El Salvador, each having a distinct political strategy.

The response to opposition demonstrations and protests following yet another fraudulent election in 1977, was increased repression, rising death squad activity, and escalating attacks on the Church. Unlike 1972, the United States had a new president (Carter) and his government was voicing concern for human rights. Even though the new Salvadoran regime was not dependent on the United States for its assumption of power, there was concern regarding the United States' position on human rights and the growing unrest elsewhere in Central America, culminating in the Nicaraguan Revolution in July, 1979. When constitutional rights were re-instated two years after the 1977 election, strikes and other forms of mobilization escalated. Faced with the possible options of another coup by the extreme right wing, or a revolution, the regime imposed martial law. Alliances among the leftist and centrist groups began to form. A "reformist" coup took power in October, 1979. Within months it was overtaken by

hardliners (as in 1944 and 1960). As Dunkerley notes, the PDC's resistance to joining the popular bloc prevented the total polarization of politics as seen in Nicaragua. Not only did the PDC's reluctance to join the popular bloc serve to maintain the existing order, it also ensured a protracted civil war.(1988: 381)

Unlike the circumstances surrounding the right wing counter-coups of 1944 and 1960, the situation in 1979-1980 (level of popular mobilization – both urban and rural, the role of the progressive sector of the Church, the success of the Sandinistas, and pressure from the United States) meant that more than fraudulent elections, which had perpetuated the military in power, were now required to quell growing unrest. A facade of extending power to include civilian participation was facilitated by the cooperation of the PDC, headed by José Napoleón Duarte, in the new civilian-military junta. Unlike 1944 and 1960, the collaboration of the PDC meant that a fully fledged coup was unnecessary. The PDC's resistance to joining the popular bloc deprived the opposition of a clear target such as was offered by Somoza in Nicaragua; it blurred the lines between opposing sides. At the same time, it distanced the government somewhat from the interests of the oligarchy. Even as the involvement of the PDC served the needs of the military, oligarchy and United States, they restrained the PDC from making any substantial reforms. A land reform policy was introduced in 1980 but no structural changes came out of it and the oligarchy resorted to violence to ensure the collapse of any major reform effort. In response to the possibility of reform, the oligarchy entered party politics for the first time in fifty years. The Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) was founded to represent the landed oligarchy and the wealthy industrialists. Founded in 1981 by Roberto D'Aubuisson, ARENA's campaign slogan for the 1982 elections was "El Salvador will be the tomb of the reds" and ran on the promise the "FMLN would be annihilated in three months" if it won.[16] While the two major sectors of Salvadoran

capital, the landed oligarchy and the industrializing bourgeoisie, had been able to form stable business organizations, ARENA represented its first success at establishing a stable political party to represent its interests.[17]

Repression, including death squad activity, escalated. But in the face of this repression, resistance solidified. Both rural and urban popular organizations developed. With the fall of the reformist junta of 1979, the PCS recognized the need for armed struggle as well as the need to form alliances. Radical populism now took precedence over class struggle. Early in 1980, the popular organizations unified.[18] Their ability to gather 200,000 people, the largest mass demonstration in Salvadoran history, to march in commemoration of the 1932 massacre, revealed the depth of the opposition to the government. The military forces responded by killing 49 of the marchers and wounding hundreds. In early 1980, Archbishop Romero called on soldiers to disobey their commanders on moral grounds. The following day he was assassinated while saying mass. Mobilization grew rapidly as a middle way no longer seemed possible to many people. The political opposition forces of the left and centre-left unified under the umbrella of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR).[19] Later that same year the five guerrilla forces unified to form the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN).[20] The FDR formed the political wing of the FMLN.

To put this insurrectionary action into perspective, one must consider the economic context in which the events took place. The indices of exploitation and social deprivation were even higher in El Salvador than in Nicaragua during the 1970s. While a small middle sector grew as a result of the economic changes taking place in the 1960s and 1970s, it lost ground in the 1980s as real wages declined and the government introduced austerity programs to meet rising debt. By the end of the 1970s in El Salvador, 61 per cent of the population was still considered rural, even though 60 per cent of these people owned no land[21] and

83.5 per cent had a annual per capita income of less than $225.[22] Of the small farmers, 19 out of 20 did not have sufficient land to meet the basic needs of their families.[23] In the rural areas, 57 per cent of the economically active population was underemployed in 1980.[24] With the majority of the labor force dependent on primary occupations, less than a third were involved in tertiary activities. While the industrialization of the 1960s led to an expansion of the working class (rural and industrial), the capital intensive nature of investment in manufacturing led to a decline in employment in this sector from 13.1 per cent in 1960 to 11.1 per cent in 1970.[25] By 1980, 40 per cent of the people in the urban areas were underemployed and only seven per cent of the urban labor force was unionized.[26] These events were occurring at a time when El Salvador's population was growing due to its high birth rate; when rapid urbanization was taking place as people fled the repression and unemployment in the countryside; and while the cost of living was rising dramatically.

The economy continued to deteriorate as the struggle was prolonged. Between 1978 -1984 in El Salvador, the GDP fell by 25 per cent, grain production dropped by 15 per cent, the government budget declined by 15 per cent while the military budget rose 133.5 per cent, and the cost of living doubled. Between 1980 and 1988, real wages would fall 40 per cent.[27] To make matters worse, as the unrest grew, capital flight increased.

As the left debated insurrectionism versus a prolonged people's war, the failure of the FMLN's 1981 offensive to spark a popular insurrection confirmed the crisis would not be solved quickly. While the struggle in El Salvador initially lacked the pronounced nationalist element found in the Nicaragua Revolution, this was offset by a greater sense of class consciousness. The popular bloc in Nicaragua enjoyed greater support from members of the capitalist class than occurred in El Salvador.

In 1980, as El Salvador descended into civil war, 12,000 were killed.[28] The following year the death toll reached more than 12,500.[29] Without a change in strategy, it became awkward for the United States Congress to continue approving the level of military aid El Salvador had been receiving. Therefore, the United States introduced a dual strategy in its approach to El Salvador. The promotion of elections was carried out at the same time as the military was increasing its counterinsurgency capabilities. With the assistance of the United States, the Salvadoran military was to be molded into a more "effective" counterinsurgency force. In response to United States pressure to be more selective in their killing, so as to ensure continued support from Congress, the military reduced the number of massacres after 1983 and changed its strategy to "civic action" and "psychological operations". Elections were held in 1982, 1984, and 1985, with Duarte winning the presidential election of 1984. The PDC could not blame the military for the country's economic policies as their party had a majority in the legislature. As the PDC proved ineffectual at introducing reform or improving the economy, its support began to dissolve. As the level of fear was reduced with the change in military strategy, discontent heightened regarding the economy. By October, 1986, when an earthquake hit San Salvador, killing 1,500 and leaving 250,000 to 300,000 homeless, the PDCs were largely discredited.[30] Their inept handling of the earthquake only contributed to this process. The PDC's decline in support was exacerbated further when it introduced an austerity program in 1986, followed by a new tax to help pay for the war effort in January, 1987.

Subsequent to his election as president, Duarte walked a precarious line. Although he required United States' assistance to remain in power, growing nationalist sentiments sparked efforts on Duarte's part to establish his independence from the United States. In 1984, Duarte held talks with the guerrillas, yet

he was careful to ensure their collapse by requiring their surrender as a condition of the ceasefire the FMLN had been calling for. Then again in 1987, in an effort to establish his independence from the United States, Duarte signed the Central American Peace Accord (commonly called the Arias Peace Plan).[31] Under the influence of the United States, though, the regime resisted full implementation of the plan.

As the civil war evolved, the FMLN would alter its military and political strategies to adapt to changes in the armed force's strategy, and to accommodate the need to build a strong base of support. While the FMLN continued to show its strength, a party of the right wing, ARENA, won the presidential election in .989. Although the election of ARENA might appear to be a rejection of the popular bloc, and does demand serious analysis, a number of factors played into the election results, including the extensive campaign run by ARENA, its effective use of "nationalism", frustration with the PDC, ARENA's ability to assign responsibility for the current crisis to those in government, as well as a certain level of fraud and intimidation at election time. However, the FMLN's continued strength is revealed in its endurance in the face of repression, the broad based coalition in which it participates, and its strategic call for what might have been considered a popular demand after a decade of civil war – a settlement and peace. Joaquín Villalobos, commander and member of the directorate of the FMLN, anticipated ARENA's success in the 1989 presidential election. Villalobos rightly indicated ARENA's success would lead to a settlement. For the success of that party removed the facade provided by the PDC, behind which the United States could conduct its counter-insurgency strategy. The United States, due to domestic and international pressures, would not be able to fund the "total war" advocated by the extreme right-wing party, ARENA. Villalobos argued that given the success of ARENA in the 1989 presidential election, it

would become advantageous for ARENA and the United States to accept the FMLN's offer to negotiate an end to hostilities.[32] On the part of the FMLN, a negotiated settlement which has the support of the United States would circumvent an economic blockade as suffered by Cuba or the threat of contra forces as faced by Nicaragua. While extenuating circumstances may have contributed to ARENA's success in the 1989 election, and FMLN may have rightly anticipated subsequent events regarding a negotiated settlement, ARENA's victory does raise serious questions for the FMLN.

Circumstances had changed from the early 1980s, facilitating if not necessitating a peace settlement. The Cold War had ended, Communist regimes were collapsing and anti-Communism no longer provided an effective rallying cry to justify United States' intervention in El Salvador. While the United States was responsible for sustaining the civil war for more than a decade through its financial support of the Salvadoran military, it was having economic problems of its own, which raised questions about the United States' ability to sustain a war with no end in sight. These events may make a profound difference in El Salvador, forcing the United States not only to accept a negotiated settlement but to accept its implementation as well.

Summary

The economic, political and social structures which evolved from the Spanish conquest, and which were exacerbated by the Liberal reforms of the late nineteenth century, have culminated in the institutionalization of violence and decades of turmoil in El Salvador. The persistence of a pattern of monoculture and dependence on agricultural production for export, established prior to independence, had devastating consequences for the majority of the population.

The deepening incorporation of El Salvador into the world economy, and the cyclical pattern of booms and depressions which are a part of this economy, had disastrous effects. The large estates, whose role was enhanced by the Liberal reforms, represent an impediment to the achievement of economic and social justice.

Following independence, coffee production placed pressure on communal lands and generated demands for an assured labor supply. Although there has been an effort to break the pattern of monoculture by diversification into new agro-export crops and industry, coffee remains El Salvador's main export. The efforts to diversify agricultural exports, in particular with expanded cotton production, then sugar and cattle, have resulted in the further displacement of small landowners, the subdivision of plots, and a rise in the migrant wage-labor force. Massive dislocation in the rural areas led to rapid urbanization. Dislocation and mechanization increased unemployment, affecting both rural workers and the lower classes in the cities. As agro-export crops replaced food production for the national market, food imports rose and malnutrition became endemic. Efforts at industrialization have failed to redress the existing inequities. Rather, the nature of the industrialization (inappropriate, capital rather than labor intensive, with a dependence on foreign capital and raw materials) has exacerbated the economic, social and political problems in El Salvador. While the economy grew during the 1960s and 1970s, it is evident this growth did not benefit the majority of the people. During the past two decades, other sources of pressure such as natural disasters, oil shocks, debt, inflation eroding wages, and IMF stabilization programs, have only exacerbated this process. The economic contraction at the end of the 1970s "aggravated the conflict, consolidated the opposing blocs and gravely reduced the possibilities for tactical solutions",[33] but it was the underlying economic and political structures which formed the backdrop for the conflict.

The role of the military, first in ensuring a labor supply for agricultural production, and later to facilitate the expansion of large *haciendas* at the expense of communal or small landowners has persisted. The military and the oligarchy supported each other in the exclusion of the majority from real or lasting political participation.

In El Salvador, the oligarchy, while retaining a veto over economic policy, had acceded political control to the military after the *matanza* in 1932. During the 1930s, the oligarchy established its own bank and quickly came to dominate a national bank started at the same time. During the 1950s, looking for investments for their profits, the oligarchy, in league with the military and the small industrial sector and technocrats, pursued industrialization. During the 1960s, industry for export replaced import substitution policies. Until this time, foreign investment in El Salvador was limited. While still small relative to the rest of Latin America, United States investment in El Salvador rose dramatically during the 1960s. The coffee growers, in alliance with foreign investors, came to dominate industrial life. Thus, the coffee growers effectively controlled financial and industrial wealth. While the military dominated political life, the oligarchy controlled the economy. However, control of the economy was circumscribed by the oligarchy's dependence on transnational corporations (TNCs) for trading and marketing in international markets. In El Salvador the oligarchy, backed by the military, remained largely unified in their resistance to change following the 1932 uprising. Periodic dissension within the military was quickly quashed. Overall, the strength of the military within the ruling elite was revealed by its ability to gain concessions (i.e. taxes), however small, from a resistant oligarchy.

In El Salvador, close contact due to a limited land base, intermarriage and suppression of Indian identity following the *matanza*, meant that by 1947 92.3 per cent of the population was identified as *mestizo* (person of mixed Indian and

white ancestry).[34] The ethnic and linguistic homogeneity of El Salvador may have facilitated building a broad base of support for revolutionary change as it meant two less barriers to overcome.

The legacy of foreign interference has also persisted, as the United States intensified its efforts to thwart the potential for a revolution in El Salvador during the 1980s.

While the legacy of the conquest has generally served to perpetuate social injustice, one aspect of this legacy had unforeseen consequences. The Catholic Church, which played such a dramatic role in the conquest of the indigenous peoples, has been divided by the immiseration of the majority of Salvadorans. A progressive segment of the Church came to speak for the victims of a process begun with the conquest. Although there have been such voices among the clergy ever since the conquest, they have never spoken with such strength or in such numbers.

Will the legacy of the conquest be overcome by the events of the 1990s? Although the historical facts appear ominous, the world is changing rapidly and the Salvadoran ruling elite and the United States may not be able to resist the momentum. The peace agreement in El Salvador is an acknowledgement of the changing reality. However, does the Salvadoran state and the United States make this gesture sincerely? Is there the will among all segments of Salvadoran society to sustain the terms of the agreement? Have the events of the last two decades affected the ability of various groups to adhere to the terms of the agreement, or have these events enhanced the possibility for success?

Chapter Three

Breaking With the Past:
The Role of Violence and Non-Violent Action in El Salvador

In this third chapter the role of violence in recent events in El Salvador will be addressed. Violence has long been an integral part of Salvadoran life, acting as a mechanism to sustain a political, economic and social order which benefitted the few and denied social justice to the majority. Now that a peace settlement between the FMLN and the government has been reached, can this legacy of violence be overcome, so that social justice will be achieved? Or will such efforts be defeated by El Salvador's violent heritage? If democracy is an essential element in ensuring both the achievement and maintenance of social justice, can the legacy of violence accommodate genuine participatory democracy?

During the past two decades, the regime's use of violence was challenged by armed guerrilla groups in conjunction with the collective actions of popular mass organizations.[1] The challenge posed by these forces, and the failure of the ruling elite (oligarchy and military) to quash them, culminated in the peace agreement. While the strategies utilized by the ruling elite, the guerrilla forces and the mass organizations were vital to the (in)effectiveness of these various sectors, the selection of strategies is not the only issue of concern. What effect does sustained violence have on the potential for democracy and social justice in El Salvador? Did the prolonged struggle facilitate or hinder the development of a more fully participatory democracy? Finally, what role did the guerrilla forces and the popular mass organizations play in achieving the peace settlement? Did they complement or hinder each other's efforts in achieving change?

The violence to be addressed in this chapter takes many forms, including

the institutionalized violence of economic and political structures which perpetuate the immiseration of the majority, the repressive violence of the state used to restrain the aspirations of the majority (emergency decrees, torture, assassination, disappearances), spontaneous violence erupting out of attacks on peaceful demonstrations, self-defense, individual acts of violent protest, insurrection and the violence of guerrilla forces seeking to change the existing structures through armed struggle against government forces. Non-violent action (legal petitions, demonstrations, strikes, peaceful occupations of work sites and government or church buildings, land invasions), as a strategy to force changes to the economic and political structures, will also be considered in this chapter.

The use of violence had varying effects and consequences on the evolution of events in El Salvador, and on the various sectors of Salvadoran society. The effects and consequences of violence will be assessed in regards to the following sectors of Salvadoran society: the ruling elite, the Church, armed revolutionary groups and the mass organizations.

Ruling Elite: Military and Oligarchy

Violence by the military, on behalf of the oligarchy, has long ensured the latter access to land and to a pool of cheap labor. Refusal to change the existing economic model (concentration of land ownership, low wages, export oriented agriculture) has required the sustained use of violence. Until recently, repression served the ruling elite well. However, by the end of the 1970s something had changed. Traditional patterns of military violence now risked increased mobilization rather than demobilization, even in sectors of the population previously seen to be aligned with the ruling elite, such as the Church. Military strength and the massive assistance of the United States were unable to stifle the unrest.

The failure of the ruling elite to suppress revolutionary forces, despite tremendous support from the United States, was not for lack of trying. Based on the concept that Communism, not poverty, was the major threat facing El Salvador, the United States government, under Reagan (1981-1989), instituted a systematic and comprehensive programme to prevent revolution. The ground work had been laid following the Cuban Revolution when the Salvadoran government, under the auspices of the United States, established an intricate paramilitary network dominated by the Democratic Nationalist Organization (ORDEN), established to counteract peasant mobilization, and by a nationwide intelligence agency, ANSESAL. ORDEN did not recruit its members through ideological persuasion, but through the use of selective patronage. At its peak, ORDEN membership was generally estimated at 100,000 and carried with it the privileges of carrying weapons, an identity card which protected peasants against being labeled subversive, more secure employment in some cases, and the potential to resolve such problems as credit more readily. In return, members informed on their community, and increasingly during the 1970s, acted as agents of repression against peasant organizations and the Church, as sectors of these institutions became radicalized by events in El Salvador. Despite the size of the organization, Montgomery suggests only five to ten per cent of the members were actually informers or vigilantes.(1982: 207) In the end, though, ORDEN could not provide adequate land or employment, or the improved conditions sought by the peasants and workers recruited to the organization, as it functioned on behalf of the land owners.

Since the repressive strategies of the ruling elite had been effective in the past, they failed to anticipate the degree of mobilization which would result from its use of electoral fraud and repression during the 1970s. In reaction to the 1977 electoral fraud, a permanent protest was set up in the Plaza Libertad in the

capital. On February 28 troops moved in, killing dozens of people.[2] As a result of this massacre, following upon yet another case of blatant electoral fraud, even the PCS changed its policy and made the decision to join the armed struggle. By the end of the decade there were five guerrilla groups, each aligned with distinct political and mass organizations.

As part of the repressive mechanisms used by the ruling elite, the first death squad was established in 1975.[3] As with other death squads which subsequently emerged, it had links to the military and received funding from the oligarchy. Although the United States failed to respond to the blatant fraud of the 1972 and 1977 elections, the tactics of the death squads, the increased attacks on the Church, and the general level of government repression in 1977, increased tension between the two countries. When Father Rutilio Grande was murdered that year, not only did it radicalize his friend, Archbishop Romero, it elicited international condemnation and further disapproval from the United States government.

As the repression escalated without any corresponding demobilization of guerrilla forces or the mass organizations, the effect on the economy was dramatic. One billion dollars left El Salvador in 1978-1979. As Montgomery reported, by January of the following year $800,000 was being withdrawn from saving accounts per day and employment in the industrial sector declined dramatically as businesses closed.(1982: 172) The Carter government used the suspension of various forms of assistance in an effort to moderate the repressive forces in El Salvador. However, this policy never proved effective as the United States was unwilling to sustain it in the face of a possible revolution.[4]

Faced with the triumph of the Sandinistas next door, and the potential for a second revolution in El Salvador, the United States began modernizing the Salvadoran armed forces and sought civilian participation in the junta as hardlin-

ers took over the reformist coup of 1979. The participation of the PDC, under José Napoleón Duarte, accommodated the United States. Duarte's selection as president of the ruling junta in 1982, and his subsequent election to the presidency in 1984, facilitated the approval of increased military aid from the United States Congress. Yet, even as the ruling elite benefitted from the role played by the PDC, it ensured the erosion of the party's legitimacy by the military's refusal to abide by the rule of law and the oligarchy's resistance to economic reforms.

In an effort to pre-empt support for the revolutionary forces, the United States assisted in an attempt to implement the land reform policy initiated by the reformist junta of October 1979. However, any chance of real reform quickly faded. The resistance of the landed oligarchy to any aspects of the agrarian reform policy which threatened their well-being led to a bloodbath. By October 1979, when land reform was initially implemented, more than 300 people had been killed.[5] By December, as the hardliners consolidated their position on the ruling junta, resistance by the ruling elite to any significant concessions grew. In 1980, as El Salvador descended into civil war, 12,000 people were killed. Yet the unrest grew and only intensified further when, on March 24, 1980, one day after calling upon soldiers to disobey their commanders and lay down their arms, Archbishop Romero was assassinated while saying mass. The following year another 12,500 people were killed.

Events surrounding the transitions within the ruling junta, and efforts at reform, fractured the PDC and caused the capitalists to establish a political party, ARENA, separate from the PCN which was dominated by the military. As one sector of the PDC formed an alliance with the military, another resigned from the junta and cabinet and many joined the FDR. Miles and Ostertag indicate that as ARENA gained strength during the 1980s the PCN lost political power.(July 1989: 17)

The extent of the atrocities reached the point where it became awkward for the United States Congress to continue approving the level of military aid El Salvador had been receiving. The death toll forced President Reagan to urge some restraint on the part of the military. Continued military aid from the United States became an incentive for the military to curb some of its activities.

While the "selective" use of violence encouraged by the United States led to a decline in death squad activity, no selectivity was evident in the military's approach to the rural areas which formed the strongholds of the FMLN. These areas suffered frequent aerial bombardments and military sweeps. Entire communities, including schools, hospitals and churches, were destroyed; crops were burned and animals massacred; and people were forced to retreat in mass withdrawals (*guindas*), pursued by the military. Yet, many people stayed in these areas, some of whom did so as a demonstration of their commitment to the revolutionary struggle.[6]

In an effort to defeat the FMLN, the Reagan administration took on the task of turning the Salvadoran military into an "effective" counterinsurgency force based on the use of small mobile military units. Having fought communism before and lost, the United States pursued new strategies called "low intensity conflict" (LIC).[7] The unconventional nature of such a strategy permitted adaptability and flexibility on the part of the aggressor, presenting guerrilla forces with a direct challenge to one of their traditional strengths. Early efforts by the United States to encourage such an approach in El Salvador were resisted by senior military officers who pursued traditional theories of conventional war. The Salvadoran military faced other obstacles to the implementation of this new strategy as well. These obstacles included a lack of officers to lead small mobile units, the size of the armed forces,[8] and the need to guard fixed installations from guerrilla attacks. The United States' effort included a billion dollars of mili-

tary aid during the 1980s (in comparison to a total of $16.7 million from 1950 until 1979[9]), extensive United States' training, and the grooming of a new generation of young military officers. By 1983 the United States had rearmed and reorganized the military. A 1983 offensive by the FMLN forced the military to rethink its strategy, and thus facilitated the transition to small mobile units. This change in strategy was also accommodated by a purge of the officer corp in 1984, in favor of United States supporters.

The strategic goal of LIC was the pacification of the target population. Integral to the process of pacification was the development of effective intelligence links regarding local conditions and the implementation of economic, social, psychological and political programs designed to win the "hearts and minds" of the population. It is generally acknowledged that, overall, these efforts failed.[10] The Church refused to lend legitimacy to such programs by declining to distribute aid offered as part of this strategy. The use of civic patrols to blur the lines between civilian and military functions failed. Whether out of support for the revolutionary struggle, fear of FMLN reprisals against the poorly armed civil patrol units, or a reluctance to serve alongside former members of the vilified ORDEN forces, many communities refused to form civil patrols, even if denied access to food aid and economic assistance. The army later experimented with mixed civilian and soldier units in an effort to establish a viable civil defense force.[11] Even though the FMLN's retained control of significant amounts of territory, this approach may have had an effect on the FMLN's ability to expand into new territory.

The need to gain legitimacy for the regime in power and sustain support for the war effort had unintended consequences. Elections were promoted as the basis for an alternative social system. They also provided a "legitimate" base upon which the United States government could build support for its policies,

both within El Salvador and at home in the United States. However, the 1982 election for the Constituent Assembly permitted the ultra right to regain political power, as it won a majority of seats. The United States, through the military, intervened to ensure D'Aubuisson, of the ultra right party ARENA, was not selected as president of the Assembly 1982. This manipulation of Salvadoran politics created tension between ARENA, the United States, and those elements of the military supporting the United States. This tension only heightened when the United States worked to ensure D'Aubuisson's defeat in the 1984 presidential election.[12] The political opening created by the 1984 election for president facilitated a revitalization of the urban popular movement. Following the failed offensive of the FMLN in 1981 the regime had effectively suppressed urban mobilization until the 1984 election. However, the state could not contain urban revolutionary forces as the political space created by the 1984 elections provided the opportunity for remobilization of the urban revolutionary movement.

During the civil war the military's use of violence was aided by technology in various ways: intelligence gathering (computers, photography), improved training and equipment (night vision gear, infra-red sensors), and the development of a media and propaganda campaign against the revolutionary forces, and in support of the government. In particular, technology meant a more sophisticated air force which was used effectively to prevent the success of the FMLN in 1983, and in suppressing the 1989 offensive when the FMLN occupied the capital for two weeks.

The introduction of infra-red sensors in 1984 allowed the military to detect the large guerrilla formations used in the early 1980s. This factor, combined with internal analysis following the failure of the 1981 and 1983 offensives, led the FMLN to change its strategy. The guerrillas were forced to disperse into small units to avoid detection. While this may or may not have delayed the success of

the revolutionary forces, it may also have had unanticipated results. With the dispersal of the guerrillas into small units, not only did much of this technology become irrelevant against the guerrilla forces (although it was used to terrorize the rural population in an effort to depopulate FMLN strongholds), revolutionary personnel were made available for political work, including the cultivation of local democratic structures developing in territory held by the FMLN, and for organizing in the urban areas. This political ground work has implications for the future as it will facilitate democratic participation, and has the potential to form a basis of popular support by which to hold the government accountable for the full implementation of the terms of the peace settlement.

While the technology aided the military in prolonging the civil war, it also played a role in eroding its support. The ability of the guerrillas to execute major offensives, to attack military garrisons and the Estado Mayor (the military headquarters), and to endure more than a decade of war, revealed the weakness of the military despite its technological sophistication. The effective use and maintenance of advanced technology required skilled staff. The capacity of the Salvadoran military to effectively utilize the technological equipment provided by the United States was limited by its dependence on peasant recruits, with a high rate of illiteracy, to form the bulk of its forces. Out of fear of the domestic implications, the United States government was unwilling to alleviate this problem by utilizing its own personnel in direct conflict with the revolutionary forces in El Salvador.

On another level, communications technology played an important role in undermining the ruling elite and mobilizing support for the revolutionary struggle. Nationally, Archbishop Romero's weekly sermons, broadcast throughout the country on radio, served to inform and radicalize listeners (his sermons had the largest listening audience of any program in El Salvador). Internationally, news

broadcasts of the repression eroded support for the regime, while facilitating the diplomatic strategy of the FDR/FMLN.

As the PDC proved unable to provide a viable alternative, ARENA gained enough multiclass support from the petty entrepreneurs and the urban poor who felt betrayed by Duarte's failure to address the economic crisis or provide peace, to win the presidency in 1989. While ARENA's platform was based on suppression of the FMLN, it soon realized the risks of escalating the violence. As part of a sequence of attacks between guerrilla forces and the ruling elite, the headquarters of the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers' (FENESTRAS) was bombed in late 1989. Many believe ARENA supported the bombing.[13] Spontaneous marches turned into riots, and the FMLN undertook an offensive two weeks later which saw them occupy the capital for two weeks. While the offensive would have required long-term planning, its execution fit with the new strategies of the FMLN discussed by Miles and Ostertag.(September 1989) Part of this new strategy was for the FMLN to respond quickly to actions undertaken by the ruling elite. Executing the offensive when it did would fit with this strategy. Another dilemma faced by ARENA following its success in the presidential election was its inability to fund the "total war" it sought against the FMLN, and its inability to acquire such funding from the United States due to the party's very nature.

In summary, the mechanisms of violence used by the ruling elite to sustain economic structures and deny political participation led to mobilization rather than demobilization (although the elite was largely successful in quelling urban unrest from 1981 until 1984). The use of electoral fraud and repressive measures by the ruling elite made violence a more acceptable option to the opposition forces. The use of violence by the ruling elite also radicalized members of the Church, a powerful force in El Salvador. The heightened presence of the

United States also served as a mobilizing force for the opposition. While nationalism was never the powerful motivator it was in Nicaragua, its ability to mobilize people in El Salvador was reflected in President Duarte's efforts to gain legitimacy by asserting some independence from the United States (i.e. signing the Arias Peace Plan), and in ARENA's effective use of nationalism in the 1989 election.

Despite the efforts of the Reagan administration, the military served to undermine its own limited legitimacy. Its use of terror, while failing to suppress the guerrilla forces and mass popular organizations, eroded its credibility with the left and the right. Its lack of credibility was revealed by the internal problems it faced: the need to utilize forced recruitment, the low re-enlistment rate, and the high rate of desertions (in December 1983 when the FMLN attacked El Paraíso barracks more than 700 troops were AWOL).[14] Despite the United States' efforts at creating an image of professionalism for the military, its inability to make fundamental changes was revealed by the military's role in the killing of six Jesuit priests and two lay members of the Church in 1989.[15] This incident proved to be a costly gesture in terms of internal credibility and international outrage.

The refusal of the oligarchy to accept changes to the economic structure, the United States' refusal to tolerate another revolution in its "backyard", and the military's willingness to serve first one, then the other, in ensuring their goals, has led El Salvador into economic ruin. This country received an estimated five billion dollars in aid from the United States during the 1980s, one billion of this in military aid.[16] The aid served to prolong the war which, in turn, exacerbated deteriorating economic conditions. Fifty per cent of El Salvador's budget was going to the military by 1986.[17] Within two years of that time, the Salvadoran army had grown five fold, to 55,000 soldiers, with another 20,000 security forces under its control. As well as the direct costs of executing the war, there were the indirect costs which included capital flight, a contraction in economic activity, a

reduction in foreign commercial credits and investment, interruption of agricultural production, and damage to the infrastructure. The pressures of a declining economy, while sustaining a war, were compounded in 1986 when an earthquake caused over a billion dollars worth of damage. While El Salvador received three times as much economic aid as military aid, much of this economic aid was directed at the military struggle. A congressional study estimated that between 1980 and 1985 "only 15 percent of total U.S. economic assistance addressed reform-and-development problems. In contrast, 30 percent was allotted for direct war-related aid, and 44 percent indirectly assisted the direct prosecution of the war."[18] Despite these massive levels of support from the United States, the Salvadoran military has been unable to suppress the FMLN.

An end to the economic crisis facing El Salvador will require stability. It is evident this is only going to be achieved if the underlying structures, which have denied the majority of Salvadorans full participation in the economic and political life of their country, are changed. While the desire for greater social justice has not moved the ruling elites to accept change, the sustained economic crisis which has accompanied the war would appear to have done so. Ironically, the very economic structure it fought to sustain betrayed the ruling elite, for it could not withstand the effects of the war.

Church

As events were unfolding in El Salvador during the 1960s and 1970s, the Catholic Church was undergoing dramatic change. Pope John XXIII's encyclicals (1961, 1963) cited the right to basic human needs and questioned the Church's allegiance to capitalist individualism. Vatican Council II (1963-1965) established that the members of the Church were a community of equals, thus

allowing the laity and local clergy a greater role. It also established the responsibility of the Church to speak for the poor. At the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops held in Medellín, Colombia in 1968, the bishops condemned the "social and structural conditions of poverty that starved the poor" as "institutionalized violence".[19]

The following year the first CEB was established in El Salvador. Conducted by leaders selected from the community, the CEBs became a focal point through which people began to take responsibility for important aspects of their lives. Although the CEBs may have varied in focus, they all encouraged communalism and independence. Within the CEBs the members observed life around them, then turned to the Bible for answers. By applying the word of the Bible to everyday life, members of the CEBs came to feel empowered to change their situation. A number of the early CEBs came into being around peasant cooperatives. The base communities provided a means of channeling fear into action, and thus became powerful weapons in the pursuit of social justice.

The "difficulties encountered...and the methods of pastoral reflection soon gave the process of consciousness-raising a political dimension in confrontation with the system of domination itself."[20] A popular mass organization, FAPU, grew directly out of the work of the Church. In El Salvador there was a parallel development of CEBs and the popular mass organizations, resulting in a significant level of revolutionary political consciousness.[21] As repression grew after the 1972 election, and dissidents from the PCS began to form guerrilla forces "thousands of lay leaders and CEB members entered the ranks of the revolutionary organizations as combatants, militia, and political organizers".[22]

The ruling elite quickly perceived the progressive members of the Church as a threat. As Penny Lernoux notes, overt repression of the Church in El Salvador began as early as 1970, when Father Alas, after speaking on behalf of

land reform, was arrested, beaten and drugged.(1982: 65) Later that same year the first priest, Father Nícolas Rodríguez, was killed in Chalatenango. The repressive measures taken by the government came to include repeated bombings, armed attacks on the Jesuit run university, torture, expulsions and assassinations. Repression of the Church increased its legitimacy among the poor and leftist intellectuals, as the depth of the commitment held by Church members became evident.

The military had not anticipated, as a consequence of its overt repression of the Church, the growth of Liberation Theology (even though the Salvadoran Church was divided regarding this theology) and the subsequent radicalization of people such as Archbishop Romero, who had previously been considered a conservative. In 1977, a priest who was a close friend of the newly appointed archbishop was assassinated and the following year a priest was killed fighting with the guerrillas. Radicalized by these events, and the general level of repression and lack of social justice, Romero later said "when a dictatorship seriously violates human rights and attacks the common good of the nation, when it becomes unbearable and closes all channels of dialogue, of understanding, of rationality, when this happens, the church speaks of the legitimate right of insurrectional violence."[23] Romero condemned both institutionalized violence and repression by the state, and guerrilla violence directed at innocent citizens, or when it was disproportionate to the positive effect being sought.(1985: 142-145) Insurrectional violence was to be a last resort, and only then as a response, not as a provocation.

Divisions developed in the Church regarding popular organizations and violence. The debate which occurred was not simply confined to the proponents of Liberation Theology challenging a traditional Church aligned with the ruling elite. A rigorous debate also occurred among the advocates of Liberation

Theology regarding these issues. The focal point of much of the debate within the Church was whether priests and nuns should extend community activity into political activity. To make the debate more difficult, events blurred the lines between these activities, as the government expanded the definition of "subversive" to include more and more activities.

Deborah Huntington(1985) discusses the evolution of broad political trends occurring within the Latin American Church. She identifies four sectors within the Church. The first is the conservatives who refused to accept the tenets of Vatican II. A second sector is the Social Christian reform movement who are anti-Marxist, but who make their support of a government contingent on varying degrees of respect for "social welfare, labor organizing rights, civil liberties and human rights".(1985: 22) A third sector of the Church is the "socially committed" who identify with the poor and reject alliance with the ruling elite. Non-Marxist rather than anti-Marxist, this charismatic sector of the Church has arisen from the people and assumes a pastoral role. It was members of this sector who were involved in organizing the CEBs. But one could not escape the political implications of pastoral work with the poor, and as this sector began to grow rapidly another developed – the "politically committed". This sector "promoted a socialist political program while maintaining their Christian identity".(1985: 23)

While popular organizations proved less contentious for Liberation Theologists, the use or tolerance of violence presented a greater dilemma. Changes in Church thinking challenged religious people to face the reality of life for the poor. Those willing to do so were often transformed by their experiences. Life with the poor and the repression they faced challenged Church members, and for many brought about an evolution in thinking whereby violence came to be seen as a justified response. Whether one took part or not, the use of vio-

lence could be understood.

The evolution in thinking among the progressive segment of the Church is evident in personal testimonies. In *Guerrillas of Peace*, Blase Bonpane, a former member of the United States marines and Maryknoll priest, describes the transition in his own thinking as a result of his contact with the poor of Central America. In this setting, he found it hypocritical to denounce revolutionary violence for "we cannot ask the question whether there will or won't be violence in Central America. Violence is as present there as disease, indeed, it is a social disease. Hence, it is not a matter of discussing the possibility of violence, but rather of identifying violence in its full reality."(1987: 39) As with Bonpane, the acceptance or rejection of violence by the advocates of Liberation Theology was affected by personal beliefs and events within El Salvador. While some accepted violent revolutionary struggle as the only way to overcome the existing injustices, others would reject it in favor of a pastoral role. Archbishop Romero could acknowledge the right to insurrection when all other channels of dialogue had been closed off, yet he stressed the power of nonviolence.(1985: 107-108) In her work on Chalatenango, Jenny Pearce records the personal transitions of peasants made through their participation in the CEBs.(1986: 117-120) The recognition that the economic, political and social realities in El Salvador contradicted the Church's social doctrine challenged members into action – whether non-violent or violent – growing numbers could no longer remain indifferent to the reality of Salvadoran life for the masses.

When peaceful attempts to obtain social justice failed, some members of the Church turned to non-violent opposition, and when this too failed and brought repression, some came to support the use of violence. While only a few members of the clergy ever actually joined the guerrilla forces, the number sympathetic to the revolutionary forces grew rapidly. "Activist priests served as a

bridge between the guerrillas and the poor and helped make armed struggle legitimate, while Christian revolutionaries took up arms and helped to temper the Marxist dogmatism of the rebel groups."[24] The moderating effect of the Christian revolutionaries provided an impetus for greater flexibility in the Marxist ideology of the revolutionary groups, and this made their revolutionary activities accessible to a broader base of support among the population. Priests and catechists also played a significant role in maintaining the morale of communities facing repression.

Technology would provide the opportunity for the consciousness-raising of broad segments of society advocated by Romero, as his sermons were broadcast over the archdiocesan radio station each Sunday. Seventy-three per cent of rural listeners and 47 per cent of urban listeners tuned into the hour and a half sermon each week.[25] Starting with a scriptural reading, which he then applied to Salvadoran reality, Romero would close with a list of all documented cases of those who had been killed, tortured, assaulted or disappeared during that week, whether by the left or the right. But Salvadoran reality meant the attacks by government forces and the death squads far outnumbered the attacks by guerrilla forces. Romero's sermon served as an oral newspaper, a vital service in a country where illiteracy was high. The "radio became a weapon in the struggle for consciousness and dignity".[26] The extent of the threat posed by Romero's sermons, as well as the station's commentaries and Romero's weekly interview, was revealed in the fact that the station's antenna or transmitter were bombed ten times in the three years Romero was archbishop. Romero's assassination while saying mass in 1980 only served to mobilize greater support for revolutionary change, both at home and abroad.

The progressive segment of the Church provided a basis for action in the CEBs (development of community based leaders and communal values), a

national network to facilitate coordination and organization, an international network to disseminate information on the realities of Salvadoran life and to establish a base of international support, and played a role in the delegitimation of the existing economic and political structures. These factors contributed to the building and maintenance of support for revolutionary change. Although the progressive members of the Church would pay a high price as a result of their role, they were a vital force for change. The radicalized sectors of the Church and the PCS initially provided the two main sources of recruits for the revolutionary forces.[27]

Romero's successor, Bishop Rivera y Damas, took a much more moderate stand than his predecessor, seeking a mediator's role. Advocates of Liberation Theology aided in the peace negotiations. One of the six priests killed in 1989, Ignacio Ellacuria, had been counselling President Cristiani on negotiations with the FMLN. In fact, the ability of Church leaders to act as mediators, cutting across political and class cleavages, may prove invaluable in the implementation of the peace settlement.

Armed Revolutionary Forces

Throughout the 1970s the guerrilla forces were only capable of limited actions against the security forces, sabotage against economic targets, retaliations against members of the death squads and government collaborators, and kidnappings for ransom or as a basis to negotiate the release of political prisoners. These kidnappings attracted international criticism, but the guerrillas rationalized their use as a means of redressing economic injustices.

While the conscientizing work of the Church eased the way for the guerrilla forces, the ruling elite's reliance on electoral fraud and repression, its refusal

to acknowledge legal petitions regarding land tenure, managements' refusal to abide by the few court decisions which favored workers, attacks on the progressive elements of the Church, the creation of martyrs at the hands of the government forces,[28] and the usurpation of power by the hardliners following the "reformist" coup of October 1979, all served to enhance support for the guerrilla forces. Increased support did not necessarily translate into direct recruitment, but support at other levels (food supplies, storage, militias – minimally armed peasants and workers with some military training organized to handle production, self-defense, and limited military responsibilities) enabled the long term survival of guerrilla forces.

During the 1970s the debate over the role of violence (electoral strategy versus armed struggle, degree of emphasis on political versus military work) and the nature of the armed struggle (insurrection versus prolonged people's war) led to divisions within the left. However, their experiences, and the inspiration of the Sandinistas' example, propelled the revolutionary forces towards unity. By 1980 the mass organizations and political forces of the left unified under the FDR while the guerrilla forces unified under the FMLN. The shared desire for revolutionary change, and the level of repression, blurred the lines between these various sectors of the revolutionary movement. They now sought even greater coordination of their activities. Mass demonstrations and general strikes revealed the strength of the support for change. Following these displays of support, a general strike was called for August, not only as a means of showing the continued strength of the opposition but, for the first time, to "test an organizational structure that would be employed in a general insurrection".[29] This structure consisted of the guerrillas, militias and popular neighborhood committees. The latter were organized down to the block level and offered logistical aid, political education and self-defense planning. The strike combined work stoppages and coordi-

nated military actions by the militias and guerrillas. Forewarned, the government attempted to neutralize the strike by passing restrictive legislation. Under threat of this legislation, the strike collapsed in the capital proper. Despite government efforts, there was still an economic loss of $60 million in three days.[30]

The guerrilla forces launched a general offensive in January 1981. As the FMLN commenced major actions throughout the country, it commandeered radio stations in the capital and called for a popular insurrection. In the end the offensive failed when the anticipated popular support did not materialize. Montgomery notes insufficient coordination was exacerbated by a lack of technological equipment for radio communications. Another problem was the lack of sufficient firepower to oust soldiers from their garrisons once the FMLN had them surrounded.(1982: 138-139) For the military, the offensive meant an immediate increase in aid from the United States. This aid demonstrated the United States commitment to the fight against the FMLN and thus boosted military morale. The subsequent repression forced members of the popular organizations to go underground, join the guerrillas or flee, leaving the revolutionary movement in San Salvador with a lack of leadership.

The failure of the 1981 offensive to foster insurrection, and the subsequent repression, led to a transition within the FMLN as the guerrillas shifted from the urban to the rural areas. Due to demographics and geography, El Salvador lacked the mountain redoubts and jungle refuges commonly thought of in guerrilla warfare. Therefore, the support of the people was essential for survival. As Miles and Ostertag indicated, from 1981-1984 the popular movement of 1979-1980 was transformed into a popular army as a defensible strategic rearguard, or zones of control, were established.(September 1989: 17) New links were forged between the peasants and guerrillas. The rapid growth in guerrilla forces created some initial problems, in particular in the ability to ade-

quately arm and train all the recruits, and the neglect of political work. However, the growth in numbers enabled the formation of large concentrations of fighters able to undertake spectacular actions. By 1983, a sophisticated revolutionary army had developed and it controlled 25 per cent of Salvadoran territory.[31] Although an offensive in 1983 once again failed to spark an insurrection, the FMLN were able to move into the Southern part of El Salvador.

While the 1981 and 1983 offensives did not spark insurrections, they, along with other guerrilla actions, revealed the FMLN to be a serious challenge to the existing power structure. In response to the success of the guerrillas' tactics, the armed forces stepped up use of mobile units and air support at the end of 1983, under pressure from the United States. Large concentrations of guerrilla forces were vulnerable to the use of infra-red sensors and aerial attacks. The change in military strategy forced the FMLN to reconsider its own tactics. Even more important to this re-evaluation of strategy within the FMLN, was the failure of the 1981 and 1983 offensives to spark popular insurrections. Advocates of insurrection now accepted a strategy based on a prolonged people's war. The guerrilla forces generally recognized the need for a greater emphasis on political work, and the need to rebuild their organization in the urban areas. The political openings provided by the 1984 election gave the FMLN the opportunity to begin activities in the capital once again.

The need to sustain large concentrations of forces had led to excesses, as the FMLN resorted to forced recruitment in some areas.(Miles and Ostertag 1989: 18) Even so, the FMLN activity prior to 1984 forced the military out of particular areas, opening space in which the guerrillas were able to build relationships with the rural population. The concentration of guerrilla forces, and spectacular actions prior to 1984, led to a neglect of the political work required to sustain the guerrillas' social base of support. Miles and Ostertag criticized this early

strategy of the FMLN on the basis that it sapped the popular movement of its strength.(1989: 17) However, on this latter point there is another perspective, presented by Rubén Zamora, Secretary General of the Popular Social Christian Movement (MPSC). Zamora suggested it was the continuing work of the FMLN during these early years "which made it possible for the popular social movement to bridge the gap and advance from the destruction of the first phase to the renewal and growth of the second phase."(1991: 184) The concentrated forces were able to absorb large numbers of people forced to flee the cities. Ana Guadalupe Martínez, an FMLN commander, suggested the spectacular actions provided a symbol of hope for the Salvadoran *masas* (civilian supporters).[32] These actions provided reassurance to the *masas,* as they reaffirmed the existence of an alternative to the current power structure.

No longer able or willing to sustain concentrated forces, the FMLN returned to grassroots guerrilla warfare. Having dispersed into small units, the FMLN returned to tactics the guerrilla forces had used during the 1970s: economic sabotage and harassment of the military. They also used mine warfare and traffic stoppages. The latter proved to be a good military strategy, providing a demonstration of the FMLN's strength, but a poor political tactic, for it was disliked by the general population. Mayors were forced to resign under threat of execution, as their offices were considered centers for organizing the local civic action programs. As a result, eight were killed, 120 resigned (45 per cent) and 64 were forced to live in department capitals under military protection.[33] Although this tactic was effective in dismantling an important element in the civic action programs, it gained international condemnation. The FMLN also continued to show its strength by undertaking a limited number of major actions.[34]

Miles and Ostertag discussed the new strategies appropriate to a prolonged war developed by the FMLN.(September 1989) Among these was the

effort to wear down the government's military forces. By inflicting casualties, it was thought the government would eventually need to extend the draft. In doing so, the regime risked the erosion of middle class support, as their children were drafted.[35] To facilitate the support of the *masas*, while providing them with protection against repression, the FMLN developed a strategy of "*poder de doble cara*" (double faced power). Such a strategy allowed the presentation of a legal face to the regime by participation in grass-roots organizations, while clandestinely supporting the FMLN. By 1989 new strategies reflected a consensus that local initiatives, independent of the FMLN, should be encouraged, and that everyone could take action without having to integrate into the FMLN. To facilitate such actions the FMLN promoted the use of homemade weapons. As the margin for error can be very small when mounting sizable activities in urban areas, the acceptance of individual actions with the tools at hand facilitated urban participation in the struggle. For its part, the FMLN increasingly linked its military actions to immediate political events. As these strategies were implemented they became rehearsals for insurrection.

Having recognized its inability to defeat the military as long as the armed forces had the support of the United States, the FMLN made the attainment of a negotiated settlement the focal point of its strategy.[36] The guerrilla forces recognized an intimate link between a negotiated settlement and insurrection. The FMLN sought to establish a multi-class alliance centered around the attainment of peace. The extent to which an insurrectional victory was possible was seen to facilitate the development of such an alliance. Having assumed the initiative in regards to a negotiated settlement, the FMLN sought to give some urgency to its demands through its military actions prior to 1989. Then, early in 1989 the FMLN put forward a new peace proposal and an offer to participate in that year's election, if it could be delayed until September in order to permit the FMLN ade-

quate time to organize. Support, including that of the Church, began to coalesce around these proposals. The FMLN recognized that, should the desire for a negotiated settlement and for democratic participation be frustrated by the military and the government, this frustration could feed insurrectionary mobilization. When the deadline was not extended, the FMLN sought to disrupt the process by advocating a boycott and instituting a traffic strike. The positions taken regarding the 1989 election reveal the independence of the FMLN and its political wing, the FDR. These positions reflected the need for varying strategies by different sectors of the revolutionary forces, it did not mean the two factions were not united in their desire to achieve change.

Despite the political and military work of the previous five years, a major offensive in November 1989 once again failed to spark a popular insurrection. Although the offensive was quashed, the military oversaw 184 bombing raids, destroying 30,000 homes and leaving 70,000 homeless, to ensure its failure.[37] While the offensive, during which the FMLN occupied parts of the capital for two weeks, failed to incite insurrection, following attacks on 54 towns during March, it did demonstrate the continued military strength of the guerrilla forces.

The failure of the FMLN's major offensives to spark a broad-based insurrection, despite evident support for the FMLN and the continued involvement of the United States, reinforced the FMLN's calls for a peace settlement. The breadth of those expressing support for peace made it difficult for any Salvadoran politician to speak against it. For the right wing, this position was reinforced by the need for stability if the economy was to revive, and by the FMLN's possession of surface-to-air missiles by 1991, a direct threat to the Salvadoran airforce.[38] These considerations coincided with developments which changed the international dynamics of the war. The collapse of the "Communist threat", as Eastern Europeans ousted Communist regimes from power, under-

mined the United States rationale for a continued war against Communism in El Salvador. These events in the Communist world occurred at a time when there was a growing concern within the United States regarding its own economic well being. Members of the United States Congress also sent clear signals to the Bush administration that there would be no further funding for the Salvadoran military.[39] The FMLN's demonstration of strength in the 1989 offensive, and the development of international factors which put into question the degree of support the United States would provide in the future, gave impetus to government support of a negotiated settlement. Faced with the realities of the national and international situation, the government was forced to ask whether a negotiated settlement wasn't more desirable than risking complete overthrow should the United States support decline or be withdrawn.

The prolonged nature of the struggle had a profound effect on the left. The failure to achieve quick success repeatedly forced the FMLN to moderate dogmatic positions. The predominance of Catholicism in El Salvador, and recognition of the role of Liberation Theology in the evolution of events, forced Marxists to reconsider their relationship with the Church. In turn, the lack of social justice and the resulting immiseration of the majority of Salvadorans forced progressive segments of the Church to seriously evaluate the tenets of Marxism. Schafik Handal, Secretary General of the PCS, indicated the limited size of the working class, and the even smaller number of unionized workers also forced Marxists to broaden the social base of the revolutionary struggle, to forge multi-class alliances based on people rather than class.[40] Out of this process has evolved an increasingly inclusionary and pluralized revolutionary force, centered on the demands of the people for democracy, peace and social justice.

Popular Mass Organizations

The blatant fraud of 1972 served to undermine the credibility of the electoral process. Increasingly, popular organizations emerged which worked outside the electoral system. Efforts to repress these organizations, and the work of the Church, became an incentive to greater organization and to improved coordination among these groups. By the mid-1970s radical organizations, both urban and rural, began to form common fronts. The development of these fronts was facilitated by the ruling elite's use of violence in response to non-violent protest.[41]

During the 1970s, non-violent protests by peasants and workers led to confrontations with the ruling elites. The military and paramilitary response to peaceful protests against land owners or employers reinforced for the peasants and workers the links between the state and exploiting classes. While the mass organizations aligned with the guerrilla forces were meant to be autonomous, the need to establish defensive strategies blurred the lines between the popular and military organizations, with militias forming a transitional link. The repression solidified the ties between the general population and the guerrilla forces.[42] In doing so, the capacities of the armed revolutionaries grew. The need to establish self-defense strategies did cause a dilemma over taking up arms, but by the time the "reformist" junta of 1979 collapsed, and terror and intimidation reached extremes, many arrived at the conclusion they had no choice.[43]

In the urban areas the labor unions participated in a series of strikes, factory occupations and solidarity actions. The success resulting from eight of the fifteen strikes between 1974-1977 reinforced the value of unified action. Despite the government declaration of a state of emergency in 1977, strikes and factory occupations continued. As the level of confrontation rose and unions became

more radical, taking managers hostage became a common aspect of these occupations. Peasants mobilized in support of the workers, and after 1977 workers and peasants were increasingly aligned as mobilization escalated. During this time the guerrillas sought to coordinate their actions with the labor strikes.

The left was changing, moving towards greater coordination and unity, centered around a democratic, anti-dictatorial, and anti-imperialist programme. In a demonstration of its strength, the unified popular organizations held a peaceful march on January 22, 1980. As Montgomery notes, more than 200,000 people participated. In an effort to provoke the left, the armed forces attacked, killing 49 and injuring hundreds.(1982: 129-130)

During 1980 the FDR, representing the unified mass organizations and political wings of the FMLN, made a transition from mass demonstrations to general strikes as a display of broad based support for change. On June 24, 1980 the FDR called a 48 hour general strike which proved highly successful as 90 per cent of the country's labor force refused to work. The response to the June strike intensified debate within the left over balancing the mass character of the struggle with the risks involved in taking another step towards insurrection. Those advocating a test of insurrectional potential won the debate, and another general strike was called for August. However, the ruling elite utilized emergency decrees to limit support for the strike.[44]

The popular movement's demonstrations of strength elicited a violent response from the ruling elite. The movement was sapped of its strength as those leaders not killed were forced to go underground, join the guerrillas, or go into exile. When six leaders of the FDR were assassinated in November 1980, large numbers of supporters saw joining the guerrillas as their only option. This process would escalate after the FMLN's 1981 offensive. The retreat to the countryside forged closer links between the urban forces and the peasantry. The

first phase of the civil war provided time for the popular movement to revitalize itself and to await an opportunity to reassert itself in the urban areas.

The relationship between the guerrillas and peasants intensified as the country descended into civil war. Units of peasant families, which initially formed for self-defense, became the nucleus for the establishment of Local Popular Power (PPL), through which the peasantry assumed responsibility for solving the problems of security, the organization of production, health care, education, and legal codes on a community basis. In the areas under FPL control, the PPLs enjoyed the most autonomy from the guerrilla forces and were firmly rooted in participatory democratic principles.[45]

Inspired by the successes of the FMLN in 1982-1983, and facilitated by the political opening created by the 1984 election, the urban mass movement began a resurgence. Mobilization of these forces was facilitated by an austerity program introduced in 1986 and the earthquake of that same year. Following this devastating earthquake squatter's camps became centers of organizing. The FMLN began to establish urban militias and commando cells. As the Duarte regime failed to support the rights of workers and continued to repress labor, labor alliances formed around the left wing organization, the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), which had the support of 400,000 members by 1989.[46]

Zamora (1991) indicates mass movement activists in exile began to return home in 1985-1986 to begin to create a basic political structure around the rising aspirations for genuine democracy. In 1987 the leaders of the FDR who had been in exile returned to El Salvador. Out of the political organizing taking place among the left emerged the Democratic Convergence, a coalition with five basic goals: 1) to provide the popular sector with the means of political participation, 2) to seek a negotiated settlement, 3) economic reform, 4) democracy, and finally,

5) national sovereignty. The Democratic Convergence saw the 1989 election as an opportunity to be heard, to increase membership, to mobilize those sectors which were inactive, to mobilize support for a negotiated settlement and, hopefully, to demonstrate some political strength.(Zamora 1991: 192-193) The radical unions and UNTS denounced the Democratic Convergence for not withdrawing once the FMLN's peace proposal of January 1989 was rejected.

The popular mass movements played a vital role in the revolutionary struggle on a number of levels. Rooted in communal groups which sought to address concrete problems of daily living, the conscientizing work of these groups enabled the participants to make links between their daily struggles and the economic and political structures which sustained gross inequalities. As these groups expanded and increasingly formed alliances, they challenged elite efforts to establish narrow limits. These groups denied the regime the opportunity of portraying those who sought change as a small group of extremist revolutionaries pursuing an exclusive agenda. The popular movement overall was a vital part of the struggle, for if the only option to participate was a violent one, many potential supporters were excluded from the process. Participation in nonviolent protest was more accessible to the majority of people, yet the conscientizing role of such participation also made the popular movement a source of recruitment for the guerrilla forces. Despite the essential role played by the popular movement, the ability of the regime to quash mobilization in the urban areas in the early 1980s suggests that without the FMLN, the ruling elite might have been successful in once again demobilizing the population, at least for the time being.

Conclusion

The refusal of the ruling elite to respond to the legitimate demand for social justice by the majority of Salvadorans unleashed years of turmoil which culminated in 75,000 deaths, the exile of one million people, thousands of disappeared, and hundreds of thousands of internal refugees. As the situation in El Salvador became increasingly polarized by the events of the 1970s, a political solution seemed less viable. Even for some sectors of the Church, violent revolution seemed a logical conclusion to the "option for the poor". When faced with a regime like that of El Salvador's, which revealed only limited qualms regarding the use of extreme violence (the reformist junta failed to prevail), and living in a country where the ruling elite had a history which revealed the lengths it would go to maintain the status quo, many people came to see violence as the only way to ensure change.

However, there was no longer only one sector of society capable of using violence on a sustained basis to achieve its goals. The presence of the FMLN secured the space for the development of grass roots democratic structures in some areas, and the existence of a viable guerrilla force created pressure for political openings within the existing system. The challenge presented by the FMLN, and the economic consequences resulting from the ensuing conflict, forced members within the oligarchy, however reluctantly, to confront the need for some fundamental changes if the stability required to improve the economy was to be achieved. Changes on the international level, and questions regarding United States' willingness to sustain the costs of a war with no end in sight, also forced the ruling elite to reassess a continuation of the war.

In saying that violence seemed the only answer to many Salvadorans, it is also important to note that the guerrilla forces would not have survived without

the support of sectors of the population unable to commit themselves to violent action. Despite the size and persistence of the popular movement, the lack of a popular insurrection demonstrated the reluctance of a significant proportion of the population to commit to the use of violence. However, the existence of the popular movement provided a means by which this segment of the population could express the desire for change, and participate in that process. Due to the need for defensive action against the regime's use of repression, and as a result of many people making transitional steps towards more aggressive action, the lines between violent and non-violent forces became blurred.

Given the changes in the world which have occurred since the start of the civil war, events might have been different if the regime were first being challenged by revolutionary forces today. The settlement reached by the FMLN and the state does not reflect what either of these actors initially sought. The FMLN sought the outright overthrow of the existing economic, political and military structures, while the state sought the elimination of the guerrilla forces. If neither achieved its original goal, what purpose did the prolonged struggle serve? Relatively speaking, it may bode well for democracy and the achievement of social justice in El Salvador on a number of levels. During the war, and the years leading up to it, there was the development of grass roots organizations which incorporated those sectors of the population previously excluded from meaningful political participation and the economic benefits of the country. Their sustained participation in such organizations, and their participation in negotiations with other organizations representing a diversity of political tendencies, provided the groundwork for participatory democracy. The democratic nature of the CEBs and the subsequent development of PPLs in guerrilla-controlled territory offered a grounding in participatory democracy, despite variations in the operation of the PPLs resulting from political differences among the various guerrilla

forces functioning under the umbrella of the FMLN. The prolonged nature of the war had a profound effect on the FMLN as well. The realities of Salvadoran society, and the nature of the war, forced the members of the FMLN to negotiate differences among themselves. The length of the war meant dogmatic positions (regarding class, alliances and strategy) were tempered and consensus positions, which became increasingly focused around social justice, democracy, and peace, had time to take root within the guerrilla forces. Thus, their commitment to these tenets may endure, whatever fracturing takes place within the FMLN, now that a negotiated settlement has been reached.

The recognition by the ruling elite that it could no longer suppress the demand for change, despite massive efforts to do so, and its recognition, on some level at least, that change must occur, if only to salvage the country's economy, may be a positive influence on its willingness to implement the terms of the settlement agreement.

The challenge now will be to ensure an end to the violence. With a ruling elite used to acting with impunity (despite United States' pressure to use "selective" violence), and one in which there is a lack of consensus over the peace settlement, the risk of a return to violence seems high. How long will guerrilla forces wait to respond in kind, should members of either the oligarchy or the military resort to violence in an effort to disrupt implementation of the negotiate settlement? The risk of a return to violence will be the test of what was learned during more than a decade of war, not only at the national level, but by the military's international sponsor in the execution of the war, the United States.

Chapter Four

The Nature and Implications of Revolutionary Action Within the Context of El Salvador

> Conflict is designed to resolve divergent dualisms;
> it is a way of achieving some kind of unity.
> Georg Simmel

There can be no illusion that either social justice or democracy existed in El Salvador, and we have yet to see if either will be achieved in the near future. The prolonged nature of the civil war in El Salvador signifies that unless the underlying causes of the revolutionary struggle are addressed there will not be sustained peace in this country. However, the agreement does represent the potential for radical change. On one level this has occurred already – in the form of the empowerment of the people, a growing consciousness, which cannot be denied and will have implications for the future should the government seek to renege on its commitments. While war weariness may subdue an immediate response to any breaches of the agreement by the state, the struggle for change has become a part of the nation's psyche and it will haunt the state if it does not use this opportunity to meet its obligations.

The ruling elite has sustained its domination of the masses through the use of repression and oppression. In considering the implications of domination raised by Litke, and discussed in the first chapter, the ruling elite of El Salvador may be said to have satisfied short term desires through its use of repression, but to the detriment of its long term interests. The effective use of repression created a situation in which the ruling elite successfully avoided the pressures to adapt. In the long term this failure to adapt, both to the demands of the masses

and transitions within the global economy, created the potential for revolutionary action. If its interests lay in retaining a place in the global economy over the long term, the ruling elite would require stability. The civil war has made it evident old methods of suppression are no longer effective in achieving stability. Therefore, the ruling elite needs to address those issues underlying the country's instability. In considering its long term interests, the ruling elite also needs to acknowledge the world economy is increasingly industrialized. If it wishes to benefit from industrialization, it requires not only stability but consideration of the country's human resources. As industrial technology advances, education and training programs become vital. Making optimum use of educational programs requires minimum nutritional standards be met, for people who are hungry can neither work nor learn effectively.

Litke indicates that one can restrain this desire to dominate if one recognizes that it is in one's long term interest, that it is prudent to act in concert with others, and to enable others to use their developmental power. Failure to do so may make it prudent to disempower those failing to restrain their desire to dominate. Whether or not violence is required would depend on the situation. In the case of El Salvador, the ruling elite felt no need to restrain its desire to dominate. Its intransigence produced both violent and non-violent efforts to disempower the ruling elite. In the context of El Salvador, these two strains of protest complemented each other. The guerrilla forces demonstrated the ability to challenge that mechanism which had sustained the ruling elite in power – the military. The non-violent sector reflected the depth of the desire for change and prevented the military's international sponsor, the United States, from utilizing propaganda to portray the guerrilla forces as an extremist minority.

Having established the historical context and the role of violence within El Salvador in previous chapters, how do recent events in this country fit the vary-

ing perspectives on the role of violence in achieving revolutionary change – those of Arendt, Fanon and Sorel – introduced in the first chapter?

Necessity versus Freedom

> Necessity and violence...are the hallmarks of successful revolutions in the twentieth century...And we also know to our sorrow that freedom has been better served in countries where no revolution ever broke out, no matter how outrageous the circumstances of the powers that be, and that there exist more civil liberties even in countries where the revolution was defeated than in those where revolutions have been victorious.
>
> Hannah Arendt

While Arendt suggests revolutions are inconceivable outside the realm of violence, she is critical of modern revolutionary violence, for it is inspired by necessity rather than the pursuit of freedom.(1982: 1-2, 111) In her criticism of modern revolutions, Arendt rightly notes that none of the twentieth century revolutions have yet redressed the poverty of the masses. The ability to overcome economic inequalities through revolution may be particularly difficult for small states, as incorporation into global economic structures has subjected them to the dominant influence of larger states. Revolutionary regimes, such as Cuba, Nicaragua and Viet Nam, which seek to redress poverty while maintaining their participation in the global economy, have been thwarted by the United States. As both a large importer and exporter, a country with significant influence in world bodies such as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, etc. and a country willing to use this influence to the detriment of revolutionary regimes, the United States has worked to limit the ability of these states to address the needs of their citizens. While Cuba was sustained by assistance from the USSR, those support mechanisms are no longer available as the USSR disintegrates and its various republics face severe economic problems of their own. No

effective alternative to a global economic system based on capitalist principles has proved viable in meeting and/or maintaining efforts to redress economic inequalities. Those countries which pursued other alternatives – including members of the Communist community and those, such as Albania, which had previously pursued a policy of autarky – are now making overtures to the members of this global system.

While revolutions inspired by necessity occur within states, poverty can not be understood or effectively overcome without recognizing the global structures which have created an international division of labor and global disparities in the distribution of wealth. Although these international economic structures are linked to the poverty within states, to date no effective method of overcoming poverty has been found outside this very economic system which has produced the existing disparities.[1]

Arendt cites freedom, as constituted in a republic,(1982: 25) as the only justification for revolution.(1982: 1) She addresses the tensions which develop between the seat of power and the masses as popular councils, which develop spontaneously during true revolutions as in the case of El Salvador, are subverted by professional revolutionaries in the end.(1982: 251) Arendt asserts a federation of these councils is preferable to representative democracy, for they permit the active and ongoing participation of the people in the body politic. Should El Salvador find a way to sustain these councils as a vital part of its democratic system, it would be truly revolutionary.

Will the Salvadorans be permitted to develop a system which reflects the democratic values of its own citizenry? What will qualify as participation? Will elections be considered an adequate demonstration of democratic participation? Some of the "democracies" supported by the United States government in the past, such as that of El Salvador, maintain a facade of democracy but do not

reflect the aspirations of the majority of citizens. The United States likes to hold up its own democratic system as an example to the world. Yet opinion polls, voter apathy, the rise of an outsider such as Ross Perot during the 1992 electoral campaign, and the move to limit terms in office, suggest a malaise within the United States' own electorate. The exclusionary rhetoric of the Republican's 1992 nominating convention suggests highly exclusionary forces are at work.[2] Instead of reflecting the United States' image of democracy, shouldn't the democratic structures of El Salvador reflect the desires of its own citizens? As Villalobos notes(Spring 1989: 112), "revolutions are essentially democratic" for, in the case of El Salvador, the revolutionary struggle required the mass support of the people.[3] As such, it is regrettable the United States, which holds itself up as a testament to democracy, did not see fit to allow the full expression of the democratic demands of the Salvadoran people by allowing the revolutionary struggle to take its own course.

In light of Arendt's distinction between freedom and necessity in the justification for revolution, which has inspired Salvadorans to support the revolutionary movement in their country? Handal suggests the problems of poverty and exploitation form the backdrop for revolutionary support in Latin America, but that the direct motivation for this support are the "issues of democracy and anti-imperialism".(1986: 37) Handal's perspective would suggest that democracy is seen as the route to redressing poverty. Villalobos indicates Salvadorans have been inspired by both a desire for freedom and an opportunity to redress poverty: "in El Salvador, to carry out an agrarian reform parallel with the development of a pluralistic democracy which benefits the majority is to make revolution."[4]

In El Salvador, the intent of the negotiated settlement is to address both the desire for freedom and the provision of necessities. These are not considered mutually exclusive. The revolutionary struggle, while seeking to redress

mass poverty, appears to have reinforced the desire for freedom, despite Arendt's contention recent revolutions have failed to be inspired by this goal. Demands for democracy by the masses compelled the armed guerrillas to affirm democratic freedoms as an element of the revolutionary struggle. Do the changes occurring in El Salvador fit Arendt's definition of liberation (absence of oppression, possible under monarchical rule) as opposed to freedom (right to participate in public affairs, only possible in democracies)? The local structures developed over the past two decades indicate otherwise. Just as the *matanza* had lasting effects on the psyche of the peasantry, one would expect the CEBs and the PPLs to have a lasting effect – particularly because these structures have already survived two decades of repression. It seems unlikely the sector of the population involved in these grassroots organizations would willingly accept a release from oppression without participating in the body politic.

Yet, it is doubtful either will be fully achieved in the context of El Salvador, at least for the time being. Despite the desire of Salvadorans for democracy, they will be denied the full determination of what form this democracy will take. Not only has the United States' presence and aid affected the outcome of the revolutionary movement, there is little doubt the United States will continue to influence the political system within El Salvador, as it has sought to do in Nicaragua. So too, will the United States place limits on the type of economic restructuring to be tolerated, just as it has sought to do with Cuba and Nicaragua.

Arendt states that a government's power has already eroded when rebels take up arms.(1972: 147) At first glance such a contention might appear logical, however, this statement requires qualification. For it seems possible that where revolutionary forces lack a certain level of popular support, and particularly where their actions take the form of "terrorism", they could serve to increase the

power of the state as it responds to the threat posed by such groups. Such a situation existed for some time in Israel. The Israeli government never had any legitimacy among the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza from the time of its occupation of these territories. Highly repressive measures had wide support among the Jewish population of Israel. It was the development of a relatively non-violent movement in terms of the Middle East, the *intifada*, which presented serious challenges to the Israeli government among its own citizens.[5] It was also this movement, and the repressive force used to suppress it, which brought the Palestinians significant sympathy within the international community, most importantly within Israel's sponsor, the United States.

Although exceptions are possible, in the context of El Salvador, Arendt's contention that a government's power has already eroded when rebels take up arms is an accurate description of events. Exclusion from genuine political participation, economic immiseration and systemic repression of the masses were required to sustain the position of the ruling elite. The need to resort to these tactics revealed the regime's lack of legitimacy among the general population. These conditions already existed when the guerrilla forces appeared in the 1970s.

One role of revolutionary violence cited by Arendt, that of creating a new beginning by permitting a break with the past, occurred in El Salvador. The use of revolutionary violence was the overt signal that things had changed. Until that time, violence was used successfully by the state institutions to demobilize the general population. The development of guerrilla forces in the 1970s, their ability to exist over an extended period and to be capable of occupying a significant amount of territory, meant that the regime's use of violence could no longer successfully demobilize the masses. Past policies no longer worked. Despite the development of new strategies, the ruling elite was forced to concede to change

in order to achieve the stability required for economic growth. However, the inability of the FMLN to achieve a military victory over the state's armed forces limits the degree to which a break with the past will occur. Rather than the overthrow of the existing structures, change is to occur within these structures. The risk of a return of revolutionary violence may pressure the ruling elite to actually implement the changes agreed upon. While the regime may hope that a general sense of war-weariness will prevent a return to revolutionary violence, it also needs to consider the risk of even greater mobilization should it fail to implement the terms of the agreement.

Another role of violence cited by Arendt is the unmasking of the enemy's hypocrisy – the ability to rule without using overt violence.(1969: 162-163) While the ruling elite's retention of power had long been sustained by systemic repression, the regime's willingness to use extreme levels of indiscriminate violence against unarmed people and peaceful demonstrators was a stark demonstration of the true nature of the Salvadoran regime. The willingness to use such measures in the presence of the foreign media revealed how ingrained these practices were. The ruling elite's use of violence reinforced the existing class cleavages. The armed forces' disregard for the rule of law, and the inability or unwillingness of those in positions of power (civilian government officials, the courts, etc.) to redress its abuse of power, offered further reinforcement of societal cleavages.

In considering the regime's use of violence, Arendt looks at its relationship to power. As she defines it, power is the ability to act in concert. She describes power and violence as opposites.(1972: 155) When power is waning the regime may resort to violence. Arendt considers this use of violence by the regime, in the face of its waning power, to be terror.(1972: 154) She distinguishes between violence and terror, for terror is "the form of government that comes into being

when violence, having destroyed all power, does not abdicate but, on the contrary, remains in full control. It has often been noticed that the effectiveness of terror depends almost entirely on the degree of social atomization."(1972: 154) Within El Salvador, social atomization had been high. Only a small percentage of the urban labor force was unionized and most worked in facilities employing few people. In the 1960s, the PDC had an urban bias, neglecting the rural areas. Having borne the brunt of the *matanza,* the rural population lived with the memories of this event. As well, people were denied the right to organize, and when this was changed, only state-approved organizations were permitted to operate legally. Violence by the state was used to perpetuate and reinforce social atomization. The atomization of the masses ended when the Church began to assume the responsibility of giving a voice to the poor. It became a focal point for organizing and coordinating demands for change. Having been empowered by the work of the Church, other organizations developed. The degree of mobilization before the civil war aided the survival of the FMLN, as it was forced to relocate to the rural areas following the 1981 offensive. The state's use of violence to maintain social atomization was no longer effective.

While substituting violence for power can produce victory, Arendt is right in suggesting the price is high, not only for the vanquished but for the victor as well.(1972: 152-155) In El Salvador, the ruling elite had only a narrow power base, and maintaining its position required the use of sustained and systematic violence. Until recently, the cost to the ruling elite had been minimal, and even now it is blunted by the participation of the United States. But ultimately, if the price to be paid is the full implementation of the negotiated settlement, the democratic process will ensure the erosion of long-established privileges enjoyed by the current elite ruling the country. Resistance to the introduction of the terms of the settlement may mean continued instability and thus, continued economic

decline. While members of the ruling elite might escape with their lives, they may lose the economic benefits they struggled to retain. Should the United States withdraw its support, whether for economic or political reasons, the price paid by the ruling elite could prove much greater.

As mentioned earlier, for Arendt power is the ability to act in concert. She applies a similar standard to civil disobedience, stating a civil disobedient "never exists as a single individual, he can function and survive only as a member of a group".(1972: 55) She distinguishes the civil disobedient from the criminal by contending the former acts in public for the sake of a group, while the latter acts clandestinely on his own behalf.(1972: 75-76) The conceptualization of power and civil disobedience as group-based, needs to be challenged. Arendt's concept of power and civil disobedience is valid if effectiveness is the criteria for evaluation, for numbers do enhance the potential for success. Yet, while it may be in one's interest to act communally, particularly when challenging forces with the ability to repress, to deny the individual power is to deny the effects of an individual on others. The same applies to civil disobedience. Is it simply criminal to disobey an unjust law, but as soon as the objector is joined by a second it becomes civil disobedience?

Arendt contends violence can destroy power, but violence can not be used to create it.(1972: 155) While this may be true when considering the use of violence by the existing regime, is it equally true when used by revolutionary forces? In the case of the FMLN, violence was an expression of power, revealing the erosion of the regime's power and facilitating the development of an alternative power base. Its effective use of violence against the armed forces identified the FMLN as a viable alternative to the ruling elite. The ability of the armed guerrillas to retain significant amounts of Salvadoran territory allowed it to establish a strong power base capable of withstanding more than a decade of civil

war.

"Violence can be justifiable, but it never will be legitimate."(1972: 151) Citing Gandhi's strategy of non-violence, Arendt admits the type of regime makes a difference in the ability to utilize non-violent action effectively. She notes the outcome of such an approach would have been "massacre and submission" had Gandhi's strategy challenged Stalin's Russia or Hitler's Germany, rather than England.(1972: 152) Having acknowledged this reality, doesn't the type of regime then affect the legitimacy of the use of violence? In a regime such as El Salvador's, where repression is so extreme that there are no other avenues within which to express demands, can violence not be seen as legitimate? "Progressive" coups in El Salvador have never survived long and elections only served to sustain the ruling elite in power. After 1972 there was no illusion in El Salvador that elections presented a viable alternative, although the United States government would attempt to maintain this illusion at home so as to ensure continued funding for the counter-revolutionary struggle. In reality, elections which take place within the context of a civil war can never be truly free. At the least, such a possibility would require a cease fire, and even so, the risks to revolutionary forces, in particular the guerrilla forces, which might participate in such an election, are tremendous. While remaining cognizant of the brutalizing effect of prolonged violence, is violence not legitimate when the very state structures, which are justified in the international context as a means of protecting its citizens, become a threat to the survival of its citizens?

In addressing the issue of violence, Arendt questions whether the end justifies the means or whether the means overwhelm the end. This issue merits consideration at both an abstract and a practical level. Whether it holds true at a theoretical level in regards to the civil war in El Salvador has yet to be determined. Although a high price has been paid for a negotiated settlement, in the

long run did the alternative (continued immiseration, dislocation, marginalization, repression) offer a better future? The level of support for the struggle in El Salvador suggests many thought otherwise. While the nature of the struggle may unleash forces which limit the merits of the negotiated settlement, the benefits of a counter-balance to the ruling elite's use of repressive tactics may outweigh the damage done during the civil war, particularly if one considers the long term.

On a practical level, failure to assess the means versus the end can lead to actions which actually undermine the goals either side is pursuing. This process of evaluation did occur throughout the revolutionary struggle and caused both sides to modify their behavior at times. It appears doubtful, due to the resistance within the military to changes in strategy in the early years of the civil war, whether the Salvadoran ruling elite would have assessed the means without the influence of the United States. One suspects the death squads and high levels of indiscriminate violence against both urban and rural segments of the population would have continued to be the ruling elite's tactics of choice, had it not been for the presence of United States. The United States government was forced to assess the means due to its own domestic concerns, not out of consideration for the general population of El Salvador. The resulting modification in tactics, along with massive amounts of aid from the United States, enabled the ruling elite to retain power long enough to minimize the amount of change necessary to end the civil war. For guerrilla forces, the demands of retaining a popular base of support necessitates an ongoing evaluation of means versus the end. The need to retain a base of support requires not only a military analysis of the effectiveness of a particular tactic or strategy but an analysis of its political effectiveness as well.

Although Arendt cites the arbitrary nature of violence (the potential for

unanticipated consequences) within the context of a discussion on means versus the end, in essence her arguments challenge the very rationality of using violence.(1972: 105-110)[6] Despite Arendt's acknowledgment violence can be justified, and her assertion that violence can be rational given the situation, her challenge to the rationality of using violence based on the unpredictability of the outcome, raises questions regarding the strategy utilized to achieve radical change. Yet, could or should the power of the regime simply be left to erode, rather than pursue its overthrow, for there is also a price to be paid in continued immiseration and terror. When considering the history of El Salvador, there is no reason to believe any significant change would occur without the pressure created by armed revolutionary forces. What would continue is the repression, dislocation and immiseration of the masses. While these did occur during the revolutionary struggle as well, there is no doubt the end is different than if there had been no armed struggle. There would be no concessions to the democratic process, land reform or changes to the nature of the armed forces. Does the fact the end is unclear negate the use of violence? In raising the issue of means versus the end in regards to the use of violence, one must also consider the systemic violence which already existed. Within the context of El Salvador, violence was not new to the equation; what was new was the challenge to the existing violence by guerrilla forces and their sustained support.

Although Arendt contends absolute violence silences speech,(1982: 9) she also suggests violence can be an instrument to ensure a hearing for moderation. (1972: 176) In El Salvador the use of revolutionary violence provided a space in which the silenced sectors of the population could be heard. In turn, the regime's use of violence, however extreme, was unable to silence speech any longer and resulted in a hearing for these same voices on the international stage. It was the regime's attacks on non-violent demonstrators which drew

much of the initial international attention to El Salvador. However, the sustained nature of the struggle, resulting from the massive support for counter-revolutionary violence by the United States, did serve to moderate the voices calling for the violent overthrow of the government.

As a mechanism to ensure a hearing for moderation, Arendt suggests violence serves reform more than revolution. Does this apply to El Salvador? To respond adequately to this argument one must define the criteria for revolution as opposed to reform. If revolution requires the transformation of state and class structures, does the negotiated settlement present the opportunity to do so? While the agreement does not represent the overthrow of the existing structures, it does represent the potential for radically altered economic, political and social relationships within El Salvador. Although the economic changes will be limited, in the context of a world which is increasingly capitalistic, the ability or desire to achieve an economy wholly based on socialist principles seems unlikely. As suggested by Villalobos, the combination of agrarian reform and a pluralistic democracy which reflects the political aspirations of the majority does represent revolution. In regards to land reform, it seems likely that there will be an effort to forge an accommodation of both systems. The areas of Chalatenango and Morazán already provide a workable example. These areas incorporate a blend of the two economic structures, combining both communal land systems and private ownership in ways which meet the needs of their communities.

The case of El Salvador focuses attention on the contradictions addressed by Arendt and which are inherent in the use of violence. Arendt is concerned by the brutalizing effect of prolonged violence, yet it was this reality which enabled the establishment of local popular power structures, the very foundation upon which Arendt contends authentic political freedom should be built. While the guerrilla forces of El Salvador were initially inspired by necessi-

ty, the prolonged nature of the violent struggle also provided the time required for these forces to recognize the depth of the desire for democratic participation on the part of the masses. Attempting to end the revolutionary struggle with a negotiated settlement may ensure the survival of these grass-root democratic structures, for they have endured long enough the right may be unable to suppress them, and the left's continued need for grass-roots support may deter efforts to bring these structures under the control of a political party. In El Salvador the practice of revolutionary violence has the potential to reduce violence rather than create a more violent world, for there now exists a counter-balance to the systematic use of violence by the ruling elite. In light of events in El Salvador, where there is the very real potential for the popular power structures to survive and thrive, does this address Arendt's concern regarding the "legitimacy" of violence, for it may have achieved what Arendt considers the only justification for revolution – the achievement of freedom – and within the framework she considered to offer the greatest potential for political participation – local councils? In this case the means could justify the end despite a prolonged and brutalizing civil war.

Violence as Healer

> At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force.
> Frantz Fanon

For Fanon, violence is the only way to overcome obstacles presented by colonialism. There are parallels to this situation in Central America, where the neocolonial influence of the United States is a reality. The durability of this influence, and the persistence of the United States in denying self-determination to the states of this region, would suggest violence is the only way to throw off the yoke of this neocolonial power. However, because of the disparities between the

United States and the states of Central America – in population, territory, economic and military strength – even a successful revolution, as in the case of Nicaragua, has been unable to bring about self-determination. Revolutionary forces pursuing self-determination in Central America have had to take the presence of the United States into consideration in developing their long-term strategies. From early on in the Salvadoran struggle, the FMLN pursued a negotiated settlement rather than the outright overthrow of the government. Recognizing the United States would have a say in any such agreement reduced the change possible, but also reduced the risk of retaliatory action by the United States to any change which did take place. To what degree revolutionary forces in this area will have to accommodate their strategy to the United States presence in the future, if the relative power of the United States declines further, remains to be seen.

Fanon's contention that where revolutionary violence is minimal, change is limited, implies that the greater the degree of violence the more profound the potential change. However, this has not proved true when considering the cases of Cuba, Nicaragua and El Salvador. The degree of revolutionary violence in El Salvador has been extreme and sustained compared to these other two countries, yet there is the potential for less change than occurred in either Cuba or Nicaragua. Revolutionary forces in Cuba successfully achieved a radical change in economic, political and social structures. While changes in Nicaragua were more measured than in Cuba, the Sandinistas introduced a pluralistic democracy, replaced existing military structures and introduced agrarian reform.

Coincidental with his concept of minimal violence producing limited change, is Fanon's argument that violence prevents accommodation with the existing regime. Such an argument seems rational, for the decision to use armed force in itself represents a rejection of existing mechanisms for seeking

change within the system. At the same time, the state's use of violence represents a rejection of demands for change. Inherent in the idea of violence preventing accommodation is the belief that the more extreme the violence, the less likely an accommodation. In fact, despite extreme levels of violent repression and major offensives by the FMLN, the opposite proved true in El Salvador. However, the accommodation was not easily arrived at and still holds the potential for failure.

While guerrilla forces were seeking the overthrow of the government throughout the 1970s, the PCS continued to work within the electoral system. These contradictory forces within the left underwent profound changes in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the late 1970s, the PCS acknowledged that the electoral route would not accommodate demands for significant change and established a military wing. While the left reached a consensus regarding the need for the violent overthrow of the ruling elite by the late 1970s, within a few years the FDR/FMLN began to call for talks with the Salvadoran government and over the next decade repeatedly called for negotiations. Not only did the nature of the struggle make the armed guerrillas more willing to accommodate the regime, the sustained nature of the struggle made the FMLN more accommodating to the desires of the masses in regards to their democratic aspirations. In turn, the economic havoc wrought by the prolonged civil war made the state open to negotiating a settlement with the revolutionary forces. Thus, in the context of El Salvador, violence served a process of accommodation, rather than the reverse.

Fanon discusses consciousness-raising in regards to the use of violence by revolutionary forces, in that the experience of violent action against an oppressor asserts one's equality with him. Revolutionary violence represents a rejection of the values of the colonizers and creates a liberating experience for the colonized. Within the context of El Salvador, violence played a role both in

consciousness-raising, as suggested by Fanon, and in crystallizing class differences, as suggested by Sorel. For Sorel, violence clarifies class differences, including the difference between the proletariat and the middle class, whom the regime co-opts through the fear of violence. While class would be downplayed in the Salvadoran struggle as a means of building broad based support, the violent response of the ruling elite to land invasions and strikes reinforced class differences between the ruling elite and other sectors of society.

While Fanon and Sorel ascribe the roles of consciousness-raising and the crystallization of class differences to violence, in the context of El Salvador non-violent action also fulfilled these roles, and may have put them into starker perspective for the majority of the population than did the use of revolutionary violence. The ruling elite's response to non-violent action reinforced the distinctions between oppressed and oppressor. When the ruling elite could use violence with impunity against unarmed demonstrators, it unequivocally exposed the inequitable societal cleavages. Most importantly, it did so at the international level, for while it may have crystallized these cleavages internally, at some level Salvadorans were already conscious of them. The violence of both the armed revolutionaries, but more particularly the violence of the regime against its own unarmed citizens, brought international attention to events in El Salvador. (The success of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua accentuated the attention focused on Central America.) This attention acted to restrain the United States' response to events in this country, and it earned international support for the revolutionary movement.

Although violence played a role in raising-consciousness, the progressive segments of the Church had the more profound effect in this regard. Liberation Theology and the CEBs, which evolved out of the changes in Church thinking, helped clarify the links between the poor and the political and economic struc-

tures. However, revolutionary violence did demonstrate the existence of a viable alternative to the existing power structures. The possibilities represented by the existence and strength of such forces was vital in sustaining support for change.

During the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador, the guerrilla forces came to question whether consciousness-raising, as specifically related to class struggle, was necessary for participation in the revolutionary movement. While one must be aware of changes necessary to meet one's needs, the FMLN came to accept that this did not require an ideological commitment to class struggle as first envisioned by various guerrilla forces making up the FMLN, or as Sorel envisioned. The acceptance of different levels of consciousness by those who joined the struggle was inclusionary, as was the acknowledgement that all forms of revolutionary action, both violent and non-violent, individual and group based, made a contribution to the struggle.

This discussion leads directly into one of the most important issues raised by Fanon – his contention that shared violence denies any one group the opportunity of setting itself up as *the* liberators, thus assuming the right to dictate the nature of revolutionary structures. Within the context of El Salvador, the implications of this argument have already proved significant and may continue to do so in the future. While Fanon has limited the "liberators" to all groups sharing in the violent overthrow of the existing regime, in El Salvador this group has extended to include non-violent sectors of the revolutionary forces. While the nature of their participation may vary, a broad segment of society had a part in the struggles and thus have earned the right to have a say in the decisions regarding the country's future. During the struggle, the revolutionary leaders gained an appreciation of the role of others, in particular the peasantry, so that they may be seen as a valued part of society, rather than as a hindrance in an increasingly urbanized and industrialized world. This is not to suggest that the territorial bound-

aries of El Salvador could accommodate all of its citizens who wish to have farms of a viable size. What it does suggest is that the peasantry has earned a say in the process by which this issue is resolved. The idea that one has a say, through participation in the prolonged struggle, also bodes well for participatory democracy.

Fanon and Sorel each recognized the relationship between conflict and group cohesion. Fanon viewed revolutionary violence as a unifying force. But in El Salvador, which lacked the clear target of an occupying colonial power or an isolated leader whose position depended on a neocolonial power, as in the case of Somoza in Nicaragua, the unification of revolutionary forces was more complex. While a consensus for change might have existed, the strategy for achieving this goal and the form it would take served to fragment armed revolutionary forces during the 1970s. Not only was there fragmentation among groups based on the use of violence, and upon the appropriate strategy among armed guerrilla forces, violence led to fragmentation within groups. However, the desire to overthrow the government was strong enough to overcome these differences. The emphasis should not be placed on the unifying force of violence but rather on the unifying force of revolutionary action, whether violent or non-violent, so as to incorporate a broad spectrum of participants. It is taking action together, based on a common goal, which is unifying, rather than the specific nature of that action. While some segments of a revolutionary movement may gain prestige due to the degree of risk they face and the level of sacrifice made, in El Salvador, particularly in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the use of indiscriminate violence by the ruling elite meant that all other Salvadorans risked dislocation, arrest, torture, disappearance or murder.

The conflict facilitated cohesion among the revolutionary forces on a number of levels. Remarkably, in El Salvador the conflict diminished the tensions

between Marxist and Christian thought, so that there developed an accommodation on both sides regarding the tenets of the other. The conflict also forged links between the guerrilla forces and the peasantry, as the need to develop defense plans provided an entree into the rural communities. Once initial ties were established, multi-layered relationships formed between the two groups. Another example of the cohesive power of conflict is the ability of the FMLN and the FDR to sustain unified action despite political differences.

In addressing the unifying force of violence, Fanon emphasizes the effects of violent action by those seeking to overthrow the existing regime; however, it is also important to note the unifying effect of violent action taken by that regime in response to revolutionary forces. For as both Fanon and Sorel note, the creation of martyrs has a powerful motivating effect on those demanding change, as does the shared experience of general repression. Among others, the creation of national martyrs can be one of those events Fanon suggests symbolize "no going back". In El Salvador, Archbishop Romero's assassination and the assassination of the FDR leadership in 1980, as well as the fraudulent election of 1972, represent such occasions. Such acts become a part of a country's psyche, just as the *matanza* did. While violence by the regime had been used to fragment Salvadoran society, it came to serve a mobilizing role, thus reflecting Arendt's argument regarding the unpredictable outcomes of violence.

Fanon argues that non-violence is a bourgeois ploy, as that sector of society has a vested interest in maintaining peace, both for economic reasons and to protect its place in society. Such a strategy has served those wishing to retain positions of power. And it is too simplistic to cite the success of Gandhi's non-violent campaign in India to delegitimate the use of revolutionary violence. Coincidental to Gandhi's campaign, there existed armed revolutionary groups which blew up railway lines, etc. The British were aware that there was a risk of

such violence escalating. The British had also been weakened by their decline as an economic power relative to other countries and by the Second World War, and thus were not ready or able to resist growing demands for decolonization.

Fanon indicates Christianity has served the regime's desire for a demobilized population by advocating non-violence. Historically the Catholic Church has generally played this role in El Salvador. However, at least for a progressive segment of the Church, this is no longer true. In fact this segment of the Church has served to enable people to take action on their own behalf, and for some this has included violence.

Yet, one cannot dismiss the power of non-violence despite Fanon's rejection of it. Violence presents not only a moral dilemma, but a simple human one as well – the desire for survival. For the majority of people the transition to violence is obviously very difficult, whatever the justification for its use. Why else has the FMLN been unable to spark a popular insurrection in a country where political, economic and social injustice is overwhelming? Dismissing non-violence as a bourgeois ploy delegitimates the actions of those who chose an alternative method of achieving justice, when even the armed revolutionary groups in El Salvador have recognized the importance of such actions. On one level non-violent action allows broader-based participation in revolutionary action. On another level it works to delegitimate a regime which will attack its own unarmed citizens. Within the context of El Salvador, such images have eroded the credibility of the ruling elite not only on the national level but internationally as well. One must consider the type of structures, and their ability to accommodate demands for change, before dismissing non-violence as a bourgeois ploy.

The successful use of violence has a demonstration effect on both the oppressed and oppressor, as suggested by Fanon. The success of the Sandinistas, and the subsequent counter-revolutionary strategy of the United

States against the Sandinista government, had a powerful effect on revolutionary forces in El Salvador. Initially, the Sandinista success offered inspiration to Salvadorans seeking the revolutionary overthrow of their government. However, the subsequent counter-revolutionary tactics used by the United States against the Sandinistas have reinforced the desire for a negotiated settlement. As noted earlier, any settlement required the participation of the United States. Since the United States has consented to the terms of the agreement, it is less apt to act to counter the terms of the agreement.

In his work, Fanon criticizes national parties for their willingness to be co-opted by the colonial powers and for their neglect of the peasantry. This provides an accurate portrayal of the PDC in El Salvador. While representing the potential of working for change within the system, maintaining a share of power came to take precedence over representing its constituency. As a result the PDC has paid the price. Its loss of credibility with the left is due to its failure to support the demands for change, while failing to repress these demands lost its credibility with the right.

One issue raised by Fanon, which has profound implications for the future, is the concept that agreements which permit the avoidance of violence require common moral values on the part of the oppressed and the oppressors. If this is true, what are the implications for the future in El Salvador? The negotiated settlement is based on a common desire for peace and the recognition that neither side is presently able to militarily defeat the other, at least as long as the United States continues to play its current role of supporting the ruling elite. However, the state is motivated by a desire for stability so as to rebuild the Salvadoran economy, while the FMLN is motivated by a desire to ensure greater social justice. Can the agreement meet the aspirations of both groups? Not if the ruling elite continues to see its economic interests being served by the

immiseration of the general population. As an export-based economy within the global context, cheap labor is more important than reasonable wages, which serve a domestic market. If the industrialists within the ruling elite can gain ascendence over the landed oligarchy, and if they envision improving their position within the global economy by the development of ever more highly skilled sectors of industry, then the need for an educated work force may align their interests with at least some of those of the revolutionary movement. However, if the landed oligarchy retains its traditional power, it does not bode well for the resolution of one of El Salvador's most profound problems – that of land distribution. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the ruling elite may rely on the general population's overwhelming desire for peace to resist the changes outlined in the negotiated settlement. However, there is risk involved in such a position, for refusal to meet the terms of the agreement may remobilize the population. This would be particularly significant if the industrialists see their interests represented by the agreement. Then failure to meet the terms of the agreement may risk the industrialists' alignment with the revolutionary movement in any subsequent confrontation between those in power and those seeking their overthrow.

While Sorel sees violence as a means to redress societal wrongs, Fanon applies its effects to the individual level. Within the context of overthrowing a colonial power, Fanon describes the use of violence as a healer. Does this description apply to the circumstances in El Salvador? Following the effects of the *matanza* and subsequent violence used to demobilize the masses, the ability to be able to take action on one's own behalf and even more so, to be able to undertake collective action, would be liberating. Once again though, I disagree that the action has to necessarily be violent to achieve this healing process.

In considering the dilemma of means versus the end, there seems little question the end justifies the means for Fanon. In cases as blatant as that of El

Salvador, where all avenues of participation within the system have been closed off, this may appear to be an easy issue. However, having accepted the right to revolutionary violence does not mean constraints based on an analysis of means versus the end do not exist. Rather, if one wants to gain broad-based support for revolutionary action, this issue requires careful consideration. Thus, the use of indiscriminate acts of violence by a revolutionary movement can damage its support, just as it can mobilize support for a government's overthrow when it is applied by the state. If revolutionary forces regard any means as acceptable to achieve a particular end, don't they grant this right to the state as well? To complicate matters further, this debate also raises the issue of what the end actually is and who sets the goals.

Sorel and the General Strike

> The greatest danger which threatens Syndicalism would be an attempt to imitate democracy; it would be better for it to remain content for a time with weak and chaotic organizations rather than that it should fall beneath the sway of syndicates which would copy the political forms of the middle class.
>
> Georges Sorel

For Sorel, the general strike becomes the main weapon in a revolutionary struggle based on class. Strikes replace military battles, with the enemy identified as the capitalist regime rather than an external army. However, I am not willing to label the general strike as inherently violent; rather, it represents a non-violent provocation to the state. It is the state's response to it which determines whether events become violent. There may be elements among those taking part in the strike who incorporate violence, but the strike per se is non-violent. While no one would suggest the general strike in South Africa in August, 1992 did not represent an attack on the regime in power, it did not represent a violent attack. However, it should be noted the risk of violence erupting is tremendous,

particularly in a country with a regime as repressive as that of El Salvador.

As Sorel indicates, a general strike forces people to consider where they stand and to assign "rightness" to one side or the other. It also provides a non-violent means of participating in the demands for change. If the state escalates the situation to a violent level, this response will radicalize some and intimidate others, but the state may risk insurrection depending on its response. Sorel states that the practice of strikes serves to engender a notion of catastrophic change. As in the case of El Salvador, the general strike can serve as a tool to demonstrate strength and to practice coordination for an anticipated insurrection. Whether the general strike is effective in igniting an insurrectional reaction will depend upon a number of factors, including organization and resources. In El Salvador repeated strikes never culminated in support for popular insurrection. Even so, they provided a signal to the ruling elite, as in the case of South Africa, that if change does not occur it risks an escalation. Are general strikes more useful in this role?

Both Fanon and Sorel reject incremental change, yet in today's international reality, which serves El Salvador better – incremental or revolutionary change? While the changes to be implemented under the terms of the negotiated settlement have the potential to be revolutionary in the context of Villalobos' criteria, and have the potential to change the economic, political and social relationships within El Salvador, the changes are less radical than if the government had been overthrown. In that sense, the changes occurring in El Salvador could be considered incremental. If so, one must also recognize how radical even this level of change is in the context of El Salvador. While the ruling elite has reluctantly acceded to some changes in the past (i.e. limited tax or land reform), none of these were intended to seriously redress the inequities which exist in this country. Therefore, even incremental changes to redress the underlying

inequities of Salvadoran society are significant when put into historical context. This is not to suggest they are adequate, but the current reality may be such that that is all that is achievable, particularly when considering what happened to the Nicaraguan Revolution. Despite high expectations when the Sandinistas came to power, the United States was unwilling to tolerate a Marxist regime in Central America and pursued counter-revolutionary tactics to ensure the downfall of the FSLN. These tactics could change as the relative power of the United States erodes. If they do, the recent experience of the masses in El Salvador will conjure up powerful images of how radical change might be achieved in the future.

While Fanon and Sorel portray different sectors of the population as revolutionary (Fanon – the peasantry, and Sorel – the proletariat), in small Third World countries with a limited industrial labor force, as in the case of El Salvador, such a discussion is relevant only to raise the issue of revolutionary participation. In El Salvador, where the majority of the population remains rural-based and the industrialized labor force is limited and declining, the peasantry was essential to any revolutionary struggle. Peasant alliances with workers were a vital part of the revolutionary movement. In 1932, the insurrectionary forces were predominately peasant. In 1944, they were predominately urban. In neither case were the people successful in achieving change. During the 1970s the workers and peasants formed an alliance which has sustained the struggle for two decades. Together they were able to obtain a negotiated settlement which has the potential to achieve significant change.

In his call for a general strike led by the proletariat, Sorel rejects the assumption of state power. Instead, he sees the proletariat acting in its own interests outside of state structures. The feasibility of this strategy has proved impossible to date, even in countries where the organized working class is significantly larger than in El Salvador.

As discussed in Chapter One, Fanon and Sorel both reject the participation of intellectuals in revolutionary change (Fanon qualifies this by saying that if struggle lasts long enough, the peasants alter the intelligentsia's consciousness). In the context of El Salvador, are they right in doing so? Fanon suggests the intelligentsia are co-opted by colonial powers. In the reality of El Salvador, the intelligentsia can not be categorized so easily. Some members have paid a tremendous price for their advocation of change. Do you describe those who joined the PCS as co-opted because they pursued an electoral strategy rather than the overthrow of the government by armed revolution? If commitment to armed struggle is the measure of non-co-optation, then those members of the intelligentsia which joined the PCS could be categorized in such a manner. However, in a country where the Communist party is outlawed, participation in that party, even if it is through front organizations, can not be seen as co-optation, for participation in such a group could mean death. The PCS, per se, paid the price for rejecting violence until the late 1970s, as factions supporting its use began to break away as early as 1970, and in the end its delayed participation in the armed movement diminished its say within the FMLN.

In regards to El Salvador, Sorel's comments on myth, martyrdom and religion are particularly relevant. Sorel observes that myth and religion occupy a profound region of our mental life and are therefore unaffected by criticism. While not wholly true, as people are capable of critical thought, myth and religion are more resistant to this and can continue to affect one's thinking despite a rejection of the overt tenets of either. For Fanon, revolutionary myths are created through the violent acts of the oppressed. Sorel indicates the state contributes to the creation of revolutionary myth by martyring people. Mythology is based on heroic events, and Sorel suggests that acts within the context of labor unrest are heroic. Sorel goes on to suggest that apocalyptic images mobilized

both Christians and labor. The apocalyptic images suggested by Sorel correspond to those events which represent "no going back" in Fanon's writing. The slaughter at the Sumpul River created apocalyptic images, as did the aerial bombings of rural communities. The assassination of Archbishop Romero was one instance where his defiance of the regime fed revolutionary mythology, and where his martyrdom by the state ensured the myth became part of the Salvadoran psyche. Romero's assassination fulfilled the effect not only of Fanon's "no going back", but of Sorel's contention that martyrdom creates cleavages between persecuted and persecutor. For many, Romero's death crystallized this distinction.

Sorel's comment that myths are "expressions of a determination to act" seems highly appropriate for revolutionary situations. Myth gives imagery to aspirations already considered, or the event would not enter the realm of myth.

The role of religion had a direct impact on events in El Salvador. While Fanon and Sorel both found religion to be a negative force in the context of revolutionary struggle, in reality it proved the opposite in El Salvador. The fact that it does occupy a profound region of one's mental life meant that changes in the approach, and the acknowledgement of the role of activism on one's behalf, by progressive sectors of the Church, gave legitimacy to action that would have taken decades to establish otherwise, if it happened at all. For the Church provided a continuity and mobilization was accelerated through the use of an existing discourse. This continuity mitigated the stress caused by the anticipation of radical change, whether in thought or deed.

Conclusions

Peace is inseparable from justice and freedom.
Jamie Barrios

Having placed El Salvador into historical context, and in response to the issues raised by each of these writers in regards to revolutionary violence, what are the implications for the future of El Salvador?

Conflict is an inevitable part of life. The patterns of defiance are conditioned by the political, economic and social realities within a country. They are also influenced by the broader international context in which they occur. This is particularly true for small Third World nations. For those who challenge the expediency of violent revolutions, was there any other way? Growing out of the internal injustices, and conditioned by its place in the international system, violence was inevitable in El Salvador. Neither the national ruling elite nor the international hegemon in the area would accede to change any other way. Despite repeated attempts in recent history to establish a "reformist" regime (in the context of El Salvador), or to pursue change through the electoral process, these efforts have been thwarted. As it was, the ruling elite and the United States were able to mitigate the change which did occur. Yet, if able to analyze events in El Salvador rationally, the United States government must be daunted by the determination of the Salvadorans to achieve change. That they were able to mitigate the extent of the change should not inspire the United States, for it spent five billion dollars in a country with one fiftieth its own population and still could not win outright.

Is the position of those who challenge the merits of violent revolution justified in light of the outcome? Did the end justify the means? In El Salvador there is no peaceful past to draw upon. Violence has enabled the minority to rule the majority for centuries. Until the Cuban Revolution, then again until the revolu-

tionary forces of Nicaragua and El Salvador threatened success, few people at the international level cared about this use of violence. Is it not hypocritical then to criticize a reciprocal response to a regime dependent upon the use of systemic violence to ensure its retention of power? The revolutionary forces were far more discriminating in their use of violence than the ruling elite. Had they failed to be so, they would not have enjoyed a base of popular support which sustained the guerrilla forces for more than a decade of outright civil war. It is the ruling elite which needed to assess whether the end justified the means.

If a violent revolution was inevitable in El Salvador, what role did the non-violent forces play in the evolution of events? These forces were essential in the struggle, complementing the work of the guerrilla forces. Had the revolutionary struggle been insurrectional, their role would have been vital. Due to the prolonged nature of the struggle, this was even more true. The non-violent revolutionary movement was an inclusionary force, representing to the ruling elite and the world the breadth of the support for change. It also provided a mechanism for recruiting armed fighters. In turn, the guerrillas complemented the non-violent revolutionary forces, providing direction and building momentum. As Handal notes, "unarmed forms of mass struggle, when not combined with armed struggle, have tended to go awry in Latin America. The labor movement, for example, when unconnected to revolutionary armed struggle, will degenerate into trade union economism or simply stagnate."(Fried 1986: 39) The armed guerrillas also offered a direct challenge to the military which had sustained the ruling elite in power. Without these forces, the non-violent sector of the revolutionary movement would not have survived. There would have been another *matanza*.

Even though the guerrilla and non-violent revolutionary forces complemented each other, there were differences. This is exactly as it should be if one of the goals of the revolution was participatory, pluralist democracy. If the only

goal was to win, regardless of what replaced the existing structures, it wouldn't have mattered. But had this been the only goal, the guerrillas would not have continued to enjoy the level of support it was able to maintain from the non-violent revolutionary forces after 1981. As noted earlier in regards to Handal and Zamora's assessment of the situation in El Salvador, people wanted a say in the running of things. They perceived the revolutionary forces as the means to achieve this; therefore, they continued to support the guerrilla forces through more than a decade of war.

In this regard, were the masses better served by a prolonged struggle as opposed to a FMLN success in 1981? While the basic needs of the citizens might have been met, would their political aspirations have been met? Not only did the prolonged struggle provide the time for people, particularly in the rural areas, to build upon the sense of empowerment gained through Liberation Theology and the establishment of the CEBs, it provided time for the guerrilla forces to recognize the depth of the desire for democracy, and to develop the principles of a more inclusionary democracy, one in which different levels of consciousness were accepted, one in which ideological principles of class struggle were submerged. Even the nature of the struggle became more democratic – there was a move to local initiatives rather than greater centralization, the inclusion of homemade weapons meant everyone had the potential to take action. And finally, the FMLN accepted the participation of everyone in the revolutionary struggle, without requiring integration into that organization.

It will be worthwhile observing the nature of the democratic participation in El Salvador as it evolves. While the guerrilla forces nurtured democratic structures in their zones of control, the motivation for doing so varied. The FPL in Chalatenango promoted grass roots leadership and viewed the people as an integral part of the struggle. Its organizers were restricted from assuming elect-

ed positions within the PPLs, unions. etc. In contrast, the ERP in Morazán viewed the population as serving the revolutionary struggle, under its leadership. ERP pursued a policy of party control of mass organizations, whereas the FPL did not. These contrasting views of the peasantry raise the issue of peasant manipulation versus mobilization. These differences likely resulted from different views of the struggle. The FPL advocated a prolonged people's war from the beginning, while ERP (and RN) pursued an insurrectional strategy. As a result, the ERP gave greater emphasis to military organization than to political work. While the prolonged struggle has muted these differences, it will be interesting to see if they are reflected in the democratic participation of the people in those areas.

El Salvador is unique, not only because of its historical, geographic and demographic realities but because of the events which developed over the past two decades. These events forced an accommodation between Marxism and Christianity, based on the commonalities between Liberation Theology and Marxism. This accommodation presents a challenge not only to the ruling elite in El Salvador, but to established regimes throughout the world which do not act on behalf of their citizens. The threat posed by this accommodation is reflected in the efforts of the Catholic Church's hierarchy to silence such thinking, and by the efforts of various regimes to discredit the principles of Liberation Theology.

With both sides in the Salvadoran struggle having made accommodations, can a return to violence be avoided, particularly in light of the prolonged nature of the Salvadoran struggle? The Nicaraguan Revolution was insurrectional in comparison to El Salvador's struggle. Did the shorter duration of the Sandinista struggle and the lesser degree of violence enable the Sandinistas to be more tolerant once they took power? The FSLN regime rejected violent retribution for past wrongs of the Somoza regime. Or was it their outright success

which enabled the Sandinistas to be magnanimous? Although we can not say at this point if further violence can be avoided in El Salvador, if history is any teacher the potential for continued violence remains high. Unless the ruling elite is convinced it has more to lose than to gain by doing so, it may return to its long established pattern of violence in order to prevent the full implementation of the terms of the agreement. Now that the momentum of armed struggle has been lost, will people reject a return to violent struggle if the terms of the settlement are not met? Or will the failure to meet these terms engender even higher levels of popular mobilization?

What are the prospects for the achievement of social justice and a participatory, pluralistic democratic process in El Salvador? Despite the achievement of a negotiated settlement, the country continues to face tremendous challenges. There is resistance within the military and the traditional landed oligarchy to the proposed changes. The economy of the country has been devastated and it is unlikely the United States will live up to its obligation, or even its commitment, to aid the Salvadorans in the rebuilding of their economy and social services. One need only consider the unfulfilled commitments to Nicaragua upon the election of Violeta Chamorro and to Panama upon the seizure of its president, Manuel Noriega. The country also faces the challenge of refugees wishing to return now that the war is to end. Not only does this present the challenge of accommodating the refugees, it means the loss of remittances they send home. These remittances total $700 million annually from those Salvadorans in the United States alone, and account for the financing of "an estimated 60 per cent of all home purchases in the country".[7] Perversely, attempts to disband the police forces and military would also present a serious unemployment problem, and therefore there is some merit in retaining them. While stability may bring renewed investment in El Salvador, it is unlikely to happen quickly enough to accommodate the

newly unemployed, when the existing statistics of unemployed and underemployed are already staggering.

Violence and protest are an overt representation of detachment from the existing regime. The support they garner is an indication of the extent to which this detachment is felt among the general population. By this measure, the present regime, and the underlying structures, have little legitimacy for the majority of Salvadorans. The nature, extent and duration of the revolutionary struggle all have consequences for the future. What this future holds remains uncertain. Does the negotiated agreement represent an interim settlement? The settlement may endure, depending on the regime's willingness to abide by the conditions, but it seems likely that in the long term it represents a transitional period for El Salvador. For while Marxism, the basis upon which the guerrilla forces formulated their thinking, currently faces profound challenges, capitalist systems are facing their own crises. This state of flux makes it difficult to speculate about the future of El Salvador, but it seems likely that there will be an effort to forge an accommodation of both systems.

Circumstances in El Salvador might justify a pessimistic outlook when considering this country's history, however, there is also reason to be excited about the future when considering recent events. The accommodation achieved between Christian and Marxist thought, the highly inclusionary forces which evolved during the revolutionary struggle, recognition of the role played by both sectors of the revolutionary forces – violent and non-violent, the accommodation of communal and private ownership achieved in some areas of the country in ways which responded to local needs, the recognition of pluralistic democracy as a basic aspiration of those seeking change, the degree of political work among the peasantry, the nature of the structures established through Liberation Theology and in the zones controlled by the FMLN, and the achievement of a

negotiated settlement offer hope not only to the majority of Salvadorans, but as a demonstration to other small Third World states. The fact the struggle ended in a negotiated settlement, rather than outright for either side may provide the PPLs with a better chance of survival than if there had been an outright victory for the revolutionary forces. As Arendt notes, the popular councils which develop spontaneously in modern revolutionary situations have historically been attacked by both the right and the left. While the attack from the right is a given within the context of El Salvador, history demonstrates that there is also a need to be concerned about their survival in the hands of professional revolutionaries. However, the culmination of the revolutionary struggle in a negotiated settlement means the revolutionary forces have a vested interest in sustaining these structures as a continued base of support with which to challenge the right. Should these structures be sustained in their present form they offer a demonstration not only for other Third World states but for the democracies of the developed world as well.

While recognizing the need to be cautious about generalizing upon events in El Salvador, they offer a powerful demonstration of strategies which are already evolving elsewhere (i.e. the role of Liberation Theology). The role of the United Nations in the attainment of the negotiated settlement has implications for the future. There is a need to be cautious in regards to this institution due to the influence exerted by particular members (most notably the United States), however, this organization did provide a means by which the United States could reduce its role in El Salvador while saving face. Providing such a mechanism did mitigate the change achieved, but even the armed guerrilla forces had pursued a negotiated settlement and recognized that, at this time, that may be all that was possible, for war-weariness does present a real threat to the continued mobilization of the masses. If the United Nations is able to resist manipulation

by its more powerful members, it could play a mediating role elsewhere. Although this might reduce the potential for radical change, as discussed earlier, change of a more incremental nature may be all that is possible for small Third World states at this time due to international factors. Some elements of the struggle are similar to those which occurred in Nicaragua (i.e. broad-based, multi-class support), however, in Nicaragua these occurred more spontaneously due to the nature of events in that country. In El Salvador they developed out of a conscious re-assessment of positions, thus occurring at a more profound level and therefore, may be more resistant to counter-revolutionary efforts which are sure to develop. No matter how essential armed guerrilla forces may be to a revolutionary struggle, recent events in Eastern Europe and the role non-violent forces played in achieving change in El Salvador refocus our attention on this aspect of revolution. Although such forces gained recognition in the decolonization of India and the civil rights movement in the United States, El Salvador offers a contemporary example of the complementary role played by armed guerrillas and non-violent action in a world which is in a state of flux, and where there are growing demands for change to economic and political structures. The accommodation achieved between religious forces and Marxists, and between socialist and capitalist structures in some sectors of the country, demonstrate the potential to evolve unique and exciting local strategies. While these particular strategies may not be appropriate elsewhere, they demonstrate the ability to develop and implement arrangements appropriate to local needs and within the broader struggle to achieve greater social justice.

Notes

Preface

1. Bonpane, Blase. *Guerrillas of Peace* (Boston: South End Press, 1987): 99.

Chapter One

1. Karl, Terry Lynn. "El Salvador's Negotiated Revolution" *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1992): 147.

2. Boudreaux, Bob. "Civil War Ends in El Salvador With Signing of Treaty" *Los Angeles Times* (January 17,1992). Hamilton, Nora, et al. *Crisis in Central America: Regional Dynamics and U.S. Policy in the 1980s* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988): 76.

3. Arendt also distinguishes violence and force. Force is reserved "for the 'forces of nature' or the 'force of circumstances' to indicate the energy released by physical or social movements". Arendt also distinguishes violence from strength, an "individual entity", and power, the ability to "act in concert".(1972: 143-144)

Chapter Two

1. Barry, Tom. *Roots of Rebellion: Land & Hunger in Central America* (Boston: South End Press, 1987). As Barry notes, El Salvador has long been reliant on this commodity: "by the late 1920s, coffee accounted for 95 percent of El Salvador's exports." Although declining in importance, coffee still accounted for 50 per cent of El Salvador's export earnings in 1985. In 1987, 4 per cent of the coffee plantations were owned by 36 families and accounted for 60 percent of the coffee land while "15,000 small landowners share only 6 per cent of the coffee lands".(26-27)

2. Dunkerley, James. *Power in the Isthmus* (New York: Verso, 1988) and Cockcroft, James. *Neighbors in Turmoil: Latin America* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989). Central America faced negative terms of trade at this time. Dunkerley cites the following data to illustrate the effect of the economic crises facing the region: between 1928 and 1932 the price of coffee fell by 62 per cent(91), at a time when coffee made up 90% of El Salvador's export earnings. Wage cuts: 30 per cent(93) Cockcroft indicates that at this time 1 per cent of the population was "upper class", 4.4 per cent were middle class and the remainder were the lower class.(129)

3. Dunkerley (1988): 76-77.

4. Montgomery, Tommie Sue. *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982). It is debated whether the majority of their followers were reacting to social, political and economic grievances or acting out of ideological commitment.(201-202: fn 42)

5. Dunkerley (1988): 118.

6. The army officers involved in the coup were dismayed at the privileges received by the para-military forces, and by the level of corruption. They made demands for technical efficiency and civil liberties.[Dunkerley (1988): 119].

7. Dunkerley (1988): 253 and Montgomery (1982): 70-71.

8. During the 1960s the university population in El Salvador rose from 3,000 to 30,000. To add to the tension on campus during the 1970s, $30 million was spent on the Miss Universe contest held in El Salvador in 1975. Protests over such an expenditure, on this type of event, erupted on campus. The military occupation of the campus following these protests further radi-

calized the students.

9. Armstrong, Rosalie and Warwick. "The Rural Roots of Social Struggle: The Peasantry in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua" *North South: Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 8 (November 15, 1983): 36.

10. Booth, J. and Walker, T. *Understanding Central America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989). While the economic policies of the 1960s led to rapid growth, it also resulted in a further escalation in dispossession and an increase in the gap between rich and poor. In El Salvador: those *campesinos* (peasants) without land "rose from 12 percent in 1961 to 41 percent in 1971".(76) Burbach, R. and Flynn, P. *Agribusiness in the Americas* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980). During these same years, "there was a 77 percent decrease in the amount of land farmed by *colonos* (resident workers, sharecroppers), and the number of *colono* plots declined by 70 percent."(143) While the industrial growth during this time saw an increase in employment in the industrial sector (1961 - 12.8 per cent, 1970 - 20.9per cent), the capital intensive nature of investment eventually resulted in an overall decline to 9.9 per cent in this sector of the work force.(Montgomery: 92) These trends were further exacerbated during the 1970s. In 1979 "99.15 percent of the landowners held 22.7 percent of the land, while the remaining 0.85 percent owned 77.3 percent of the land".[Montgomery (1982): 30]

This period saw the first significant amounts of foreign investment for El Salvador. Of the foreign investment which came from international firms, more than 60 per cent was from the United States.

11. Montgomery (1982): 85.

12. Keen, B. and Wasserman, M. *A History of Latin America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988): 497.

13. Dunkerley (1988): 362.

14. Montgomery (1982): 88.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid. 85.

17. Miles, S. and Ostertag, B. "D'Aubuisson's New ARENA" *NACLA* 23 (July 1989): 16.

18. The following information has been drawn from Montgomery (1982). It is important to distinguish the popular organizations from government organizations for they vary in two significant ways, ideology and structure. The government, with the aid of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), established the Salvadoran Communal Union (UCS) in 1966, as a means of co-opting the peasantry. The UCS was organized from the top down and sought to maintain the status quo. Even so, its leaders eventually came under attack. As a result the UCS split, with one segment aligning itself with the government while the other (whose strength lay in the three western most departments) allied itself with FAPU.

The 1970s saw a rapid development of mass organizations. While too numerous to discuss in detail, the popular organizations developed through grassroots organizing, with groups being encouraged to chose their own leaders as the CEBs had done. These various popular organizations gradually formed alliances until mass organizations existed. Aligned with various political-military organizations and armed guerrilla forces, the popular organizations reflected similar differences as these groups, in regards to the nature of the political struggle - insurrectional versus prolonged struggle; the strategy for building popular organizations - through workers, *campesinos* or by an alliance of these two sectors, inclusion of progressive elements of the middle class and military; and tactics for expanding support - from the base up or by seeking the leadership of unions, etc. As mobilization escalated in the late 1970s all three segments of the popular bloc noted above began to unify.

19. The following information is drawn from Montgomery (1982) and Dunkerley (1988). The establishment of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) saw the coalescence of the

opposition forces of the centre-left and left. The FDR incorporated the following "political-military organizations": Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL) which had been established in 1972 on the principles of class based politics (no possible alliances with military or middle class) and a prolonged people's war; National Resistance (RN) founded in 1975 on the principles of an anti-fascist front; Party of the Salvadoran Revolution (PRS), founded in 1977 as the political wing of the Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP) which gave lower priority to orthodox Marxism but retained emphasis on the military vanguardism of insurrectional strategy; Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers (PRTC) sought a regional solution although there evolved distinct national units in 1980; Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS) while outlawed, the Nationalist Democratic Union (UDN) served as a front for the PCS in pursuit of its reformist strategy by participating in the electoral process. In the late 1970s, faced with the government's persistent manipulation of the electoral system and the level of repression, the PCS revised its strategy and advocated armed struggle.

The FDR also incorporated "mass organizations". The mass organizations included: the United Popular Action Front (FAPU) which pursued a principle of developing strategy appropriate to the historic moment; the Popular Revolutionary Front (BPR), which split from FAPU in 1975 over their own belief in a prolonged people's war and their emphasis on peasant participation; the 28th of February Popular Leagues (LP-28), founded by ERP in 1978, had the least well developed political plan due to ERP's highly militaristic views; the Nationalist Democratic Union (UDN), while initially representing the "reformist" policies of the PCS, the UDN was also involved in the labor unions and teacher and student organizations, entitling it to be considered among the popular organizations; and finally, the newest and smallest mass organization, the Popular Liberation Movement (MLP), formed by the PRTC in 1979.

In December 1979 the mass organizations unified to form the Revolutionary Coordination of the Masses (CRM). Early the following year the political-military organizations formed the Unified Revolutionary Direction (DRU), establishing the basis for a unified command in 1981. Archbishop Romero's assassination in 1980 served as the impetus for the unification of the various elements of the left into the FDR. This alliance incorporated; "political parties, professionals and technicians, small business organizations, the National university, six unions and union federations", a student association, and the CRM; with University of Central America and the Catholic Church as observers.(Montgomery: 133) In the unification process the various segments of the FDR would submerge their differences as the overthrow of the regime took precedence.

20. The following information is drawn from Montgomery (1982) and Dunkerley (1988). The guerrilla forces making up the FMLN are: the Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL), founded in 1970 on the principles of class based politics and a prolonged people's war, while rejecting the *foco* strategy of guerrilla warfare, the existence of a national bourgeoisie and electoralism; the Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP) which gave lower priority to orthodox Marxism but retained an emphasis on the military vanguardism of insurrectional strategy upon its founding in 1972 (developed into the most powerful segment of the guerrilla forces); the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN) which initially focused on the development of an anti-fascist front, and would provide a mediating force between the mass organizations and the class based strategy of the FPL and the military sectarianism of the ERP; the armed wing of the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers (PRTC) which initially sought a regional solution to problems in Central America; and finally the Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL) the armed wing of the PCS once it made the decision to undertake armed struggle. As with the unification of the political-military and mass organizations, the consolidation of guerrilla forces required a submergence of differences in an effort to overthrow the government.

21. Barry, T. and Preusch, D. *The Central American Fact Book* (New York: Grove Press,

Inc. 1986): 216.

22. Armstrong, Rosalie and Warwick (1983): 37.

23. Barry, T. and Preusch, D. (1986): 140.

24. Ibid. 168.

25. Armstrong, Rosalie and Warwick (1983): 36.

26. Barry, T. and Preusch, D. (1986): 168.

27. Dunkerley (1988): 410.

28. Estimates of the number killed in 1980 vary however, 12,000 dead was the most consistently quoted number. Examples of those quoting this number are Bonpane (1987):99and Hamilton, et al. (1988): 175. Jenny Pearce [*Promised Land: Peasant Rebellion in Chalatenango El Salvador* (London: Latin American Bureau, 1986): 196.] indicates 13,0000 were killed while John Booth and Thomas Walker [Understanding Central America (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989): 79] cite 8,024.

29. Estimates on the death toll in 1981 also vary. The Americas Watch Committee and the American Civil Liberties Union [*Report on Human Rights in El Salvador* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982): 278-281] cite 12, 501 while Booth and Walker indicate 13,353 people died in 1981.

30. Hamilton, et al. (1988): 200.

31. In the early 1980s, Latin American governments sought a regional solution to the unrest in Central America. Sponsored by Columbia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela, and enjoying the backing of other Latin American governments, the Contadora Peace Plan of 1983-1984 called for the demilitarization of Central America, the withdrawal of foreign military personnel and laid out guarantees for democratic pluralism. However, these efforts were blocked by the United States. The additional weight of a support group in 1985 which included the governments of Peru, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, was not enough to neutralize the United States resistance. The failure of the Contadora Peace Plan was followed by the Arias Peace Plan, which maintained many of the same goals as the earlier peace plan. Despite United States efforts to sabotage the process, the Arias Peace Plan was signed by the five Central America governments in 1987.

32. Villalobos, Joaquín. "Popular Insurrection: Desire or Reality?" *Latin American Perspectives* 16 (Summer 1989): 22-23.

33. Dunkerley (1988): 213.

34. Montgomery (1982): 38.

Chapter Three

1. In the context of this thesis the term popular mass movement means social or political organizations, both urban and rural, which oppose the dominant power structure. In its broadest sense, these organizations came to be represented by the FDR. This term is used interchangeable with popular movement or mass movement. The term revolutionary movement, as used in this thesis, means the mass organizations, and both the political and military wings of the guerrilla forces.

2. Montgomery (1982): 94-95.

3. During 1975 the Anti-Communist Wars of Elimination Liberation Armed Forces (FALANGE), the first death squad, per se, appeared. While FALANGE directed its attacks against "communists" or those seen to have links to communism, the White Warriors Union (UGB) established in 1977 focused its attention on the radicalized elements of the Church. It issued a handbill stating: "Be a patriot, kill a priest". On June 21, 1977 the UGB warned all Jesuits to leave the country in 30 days or be killed. Other death squads came into existence, and while their activities were restrained under pressure from the United States, they remain

active in El Salvador.

4. Pre-empting any move by the United States following the assassination of Father Grande in 1977, the Salvadoran government terminated military aid and training from the United States. The United States then withheld approval of a $90 million Inter-American Development Bank loan. However, when the state of siege put into effect in early 1977 was lifted, the United States granted approval of the loan. The following month the Salvadoran Legislative Assembly passed the Law for the Defense and Guarantee of Public Order, "outlawing all criticism of the government and placing severe restrictions on free association, communication and the exchange of information." [Armstrong, R. and Shenk, J. *El Salvador: Face of a Revolution* (Boston: South End Press, 1982): 97] International reaction, including Mexico's reluctance to solidify a commitment to export oil to El Salvador, and the increasing isolation of the Salvadoran government as it grew ever more dependent on the United States, forced the president to rescind the Public Order Law in 1979. When four United States missionaries were killed on December 2, 1980 Carter suspended a balance of $5.7 million in "non-lethal" military aid from the United States. Economic aid was also suspended but was reinstated two weeks later as El Salvador neared economic collapse. With the January 1981 offensive of the FMLN the non-lethal aid was released and lethal aid was immediately reinstated.

5. Berryman (1985): 71.

6. Pearce (1986): 209-229.

7. Miles, Sara "The Real War" *NACLA* (April/May 1986) United States Pentagon called it "low intensity conflict", based on "its place on the 'intensity spectrum' of warfare which ascends from civil disorders, through classical wars, to nuclear holocaust. The traditional military defines low intensity conflicts as those which require less resources, less manpower and cause fewer casualties than conventional war." (23) This analysis is based on a military perspective and does not reflect the real costs of such a policy for those caught in the conflict.

8. Montgomery, Tommie Sue. *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982): 144; and Nairn, Allan. "Endgame" *NACLA* 18 (May/June 1984): 29,46. In 1981 the Salvadoran army had 15,000 men. At this same time the FMLN forces were estimated at 4,000-6,000 armed guerrillas. Traditional counterinsurgency theory recommends a 10:1 ratio, military to guerrilla forces. By 1984 the Salvadoran army had 35,000 men; however, low re-enlistment, high casualty and desertion rates led one officer to estimate they needed to increase the military's numbers by 50 per cent just to remain at the its 1984 strategic level.

9. Arnson, Cynthia. "The Salvadoran Military and Regime Transformation" *Political Change in Central America: Internal and External Dimensions* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984): 103-104.

10. Siegel, Daniel and Hackel, Joy. "El Salvador: Counterinsurgency Revisited" *Low Intensity Warfare: Counterinsurgency, Proinsurgency, and Antiterrorism in the Eighties* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988): 124; Sundaram, Anjali and Gelber, George, eds. *A Decade of War* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991): 148; and Miles, Sara and Ostertag, Bob. "FMLN New Thinking" *NACLA* 23 (September 1989): 20.

11. Siegel and Hackel (1988): 148.

12. Sundaram and Gelber, eds. (1991): 28. The United States government offered direct and indirect funding of $2 million through the CIA to Duarte's campaign. It also paid unions to campaign on behalf of Duarte. This is further confirmed by Siegel and Hackel (1988): 122, 128 and LaFeber (1984): 311-312.

13. Taylor, Greg. "Fighting in the Streets" *Maclean's* (December 4, 1989): 43.

14. Nairn (1984): 35, 46.

15. Gibb, Tom. "2 Salvadoran Army Officers Receive 30-year Prison Terms" *New York Times* (January 25, 1992).

16. Editorial. "The Outcome in El Salvador" *Washington Post* (January 19, 1992). Golden, Tim. "The Salvadorans Make Peace in a 'Negotiated Revolution' " New York Times (January 5, 1992).

17. Siegel and Hackel (1988): 131.

18. Ibid. 126.

19. LaFeber, Walter. *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: W-W-Norton and Co. 1984): 220.

20. Cáceres Prendes, Jorge. "Political Radicalization and Popular Pastoral Practices in El Salvador, 1969-1985" *The Progressive Church in Latin America* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989):113.

21. Montgomery, Tommie Sue. "Cross and Rifle: Revolution and the Church in El Salvador and Nicaragua" *Journal of International Affairs* 36 (Fall/Winter 1982/1983): 213.

22. Ibid. 212.

23. Riding, Alan. "The Cross and the Sword in Latin America" *El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War* (New York: Grove Press, Inc. 1981): 194.

24. Ibid. 196.

25. Montgomery (1983): 78-79.

26. Armstrong and Shenk (1982): 92.

27. While the introduction of the tenets of Liberation Theology empowered people to act on their own behalf, the PCS had a long history of organizing within El Salvador. Although it had been outlawed following the *matanza*, upon the PCS's re-emergence some twelve years later it recruited and coordinated its activities through other organizations. When the PCS refused to take up arms in the 1970s, one sector of the organization which supported armed struggle formed the FPL. In turn, when a dispute developed within this organizations over military strategy (insurrection versus a prolonged people's war) one faction broke away, forming the ERP. Two other armed groups would emerge from these before the PCS created its own armed wing - FAL.

28. Both Fanon and Sorel indicate in their works that martyrs can be powerful mobilizers in revolutionary situations. In the Salvadoran situation there are martyrs whose deaths had an effect at the local, national and/or international level. One example at the local level was the death of Andrés Torres, who worked with local communities in the department of Chalatenango. It was only upon his death in 1977 that the local people discovered he was a member of the FPL. Torres' connection with the FPL gave the guerrillas legitimacy in that area, and people subsequently established links with the FPL. At the national and international level the assassinations of the five FDR leaders and Archbishop Romero in 1980 served to mobilize national support for the revolutionary forces and to discredit the regime at the international level.

29. Montgomery (1982): 134.

30. Ibid. 138.

31. Armstrong and Shenk (1982): 202.

32. Ibarra, Epigmenio. "Wearing Down the Enemy: An Interview With the FMLN" *NACLA* 19 (July/August 1985): 6.

33. Miles and Ostertag (September 1989): 19.

34. In 1985 the FMLN attacked the military training center at La Union. In each of the following years it attacked the San Miguel garrison, the El Paraíso Army garrison, and in 1988 the Estado Mayor.

35. The need to gain broad based support, including that of the middle class, forced the FMLN to consider the effect its own actions had on that sector of society. For example, sabotage alienated the middle class. As a result, generalized sabotage was replaced by sabotage "with a clear class content".(Miles and Ostertag September 1989: 34)

36. The FDR/FMLN first proposed a dialogue with the Salvadoran government in 1981,

but to no avail. Then, three years later, no longer presupposing the defeat of the military, the FMLN called for negotiations regarding a Provisional Government of Broad Participation (GAP), in February 1984. Based on a broad alliance of anti-oligarchic and anti-imperialistic forces, the GAP represented a political realignment within the FMLN, centered around more moderate positions. The debate leading up to the acceptance of this position had resulted in violence within the FPL as two factions developed over the forging of alliances with the middle class or military members. When the leader of the faction promoting more flexibility was assassinated, the FPL leader, Salvador Cayetano Carpio, committed suicide. While these deaths traumatized the FMLN, Carpio's death opened the way for the moderation of dogmatic positions based on class. Thinking the FMLN could be defeated, the government didn't want to negotiate, and talks collapsed when Duarte insisted the guerrilla forces disarm. During 1985 the FMLN repeatedly called for talks with the government but such a move continued to be resisted by the military and the right wing. In 1986, Duarte initially rejected talks; however, faced with growing discontent over austerity measures introduced in late 1985 and early 1986, Duarte called for talks. These collapsed when the military occupied the town where the third meeting was to be held.

37. McCarthy, Colman. "U.S. Training of Salvador Military" *The Guardian Weekly* (February 4, 1990): 19.

38. de la Grange, Bertrand. "El Salvador: A New Dimension to Armed Struggle" *The Guardian Weekly* (January 6, 1991): 13-14.

39. White, Robert. "Guilty men of the Reagan years" *The Guardian Weekly* (January 26, 1992): 19.

40. Fried, Mark. "Schafik Handal" *NACLA* 20 (September/December 1986): 40.

41. One example of the ruling elite's use of violence facilitating the development of common fronts is the creation of the BPR in 1975, a popular mass organization which brought together peasants, labor, teachers, slum dwellers, professors and students. During the summer of that year, 20 students were killed by the military during a demonstration in the capital. The funerals for the students brought together members from various groups. Following one of the funerals 70 of the mourners, representing different organizations, occupied a church. The BPR grew out of the debate, and subsequent consensus, which developed during the occupation. A second example is the formation of the FDR. While the selection of Duarte to led the PDC in 1980, over the protests of the progressive elements of the party, formed the backdrop to the unification of the political organizations, the assassination of Archbishop Romero two weeks later acted as a further impetus.(Montgomery 1982: 133)

42. One example of the strength of the relationship between the guerrillas and the general population is provided by Chalatenango. The strength of the guerrilla's social base in Chalatenango is revealed by the level of repression this area was subjected to, and yet the FPL continue to have the support of the population. In 1984-1985 this area became a "free-fire zone" for the military. This designation meant it was an area where civilians were to be eliminated, so as to destroy the support base of the guerrillas. Indiscriminate air attacks and military sweeps resulted in civilian deaths and massive destruction. While intended to terrorize the population into leaving the area entirely, these efforts did not prove successful (although many fled, many stayed as well).

43. One incident reveals the extreme level of terror in El Salvador. During 1980, 600 peasants were massacred at the Sumpul River as the tried to flee military forces. The level of terror forced people to leave their homes, even if they remained in the country. In January 1980, there were 2,000 displaced persons officially listed, by January 1981 there were 197,199.

44. Armstrong and Shenk (1982): 164-167.

45. Pearce described the functioning of PPLs in Chalatenango, the FPL's zone of control. Each PPL consisted of approximately 400-500 people, located in three or four hamlets. The

highest power in each locality is the popular assembly of the entire population held every 15 days. Between assemblies, power rested with an elected PPL council (everyone 14 and over can vote). The council met every eight days. The PPLs assume responsibility for production and the popular economy, social affairs, legal affairs, political education, and defense. Pearce noted that the level of development amongst PPLs varied. She linked the level of development with previous involvement with the union established on the peasants' own initiative in 1974, the Union of Rural Workers (UTC). While the FPL promoted the PPLs, their development was facilitated by the peasants' previous experience with the CEBs and the union.

Pearce indicated that while PPLs are autonomous in FPL territory (although they coordinate retreats and defense together), in ERP territory (Morazán) the PPLs are seen as a mechanism to mobilize "people for the war effort rather than for political preparation". The FPL viewed the PPLs as a mechanism to "move from participatory roles to those of full control and leadership".(1986: 241-257)

46. Zamora, Rubén. "The Popular Movement" *A Decade of War* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991): 187.

Chapter Four

1. This is not to suggest there are not internal factors which contribute to economic disparities. These include mismanagement, repression, corruption, etc.

2. In his address to the Republican Convention on August 17, Pat Buchanan, presidential candidate in 1992 and a potential candidate for 1996, used the term "cultural war" in regards to the United States, and "traditionalists" in regards to Republicans. He called upon Republicans to "take back our cities, take back our culture, take back our country". Aren't such allusions racist, sexist and the beginnings of a McCarthy like campaign against the "cultural elite"? Rich Bond, speaking at the same Convention, stated "we are America, these other people are not America".

3. While accepting El Salvador's revolutionary struggle as essentially democratic, Villalobos' contention Cuba does not represent a "dictatorship but a people's democracy" (Spring 1989: 110) requires reconsideration. To suggest a revolution more than thirty years old remains a democratic statement of the people, when there has been no subsequent recourse to the mechanisms of democratic pluralism may stretch the point.

4. Sundaram, and Gelber(1991): 242.

5. The *intifada* was the first time that the Palestinian citizens of Israel proper participated in a protest with the Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza.

6. Arendt does directly challenge the rationality of violence in regards to international war due to the technological developments in weaponry. She suggests as this made international warfare less rational during the twentieth century, revolutionary violence as a means to alter domestic relations gained appeal.(1972: 113)

7. New York Times. March 11, 1992. Item number 1097 - Information Services on Latin America.

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